"THE PRISONER OF ZENDA," A THRILLING ROMANCE, BEGINS NEXT WEEK

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A LASS O' LONDON; Or, IN THE DAYS OF QUEEN BESS.

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CHAPTER I.

I MEET THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE.

With no companion but my good sword—and a better, a Frenchman never drew—I found myself in London.

For three days I had occupied lodgings in Cheapside, my landlady being very considerate, since I was nothing but a roving, reckless young blade, a hot headed Gascon who had been bundled out of Paris by his father on account of a little blood letting in the forest of Fontainebleau.

Already, I had caught sight of Queen Bess on her way from the Tower to Westminister, surrounded by a gorgeous retinue of lords and ladies, and had emptied more than one tankard of foaming ale at the Golden Lamb.

I fancied that I was getting along famously, having nothing to do but parade the streets of London, ogling the fair dames and putting on such airs as became a scion of the house of De Bluy.

So far I had not been robbed and, indeed, the cutpurse would have had poor picking for his trouble, for I soon reached the bottom of my pocket and a remittance would not be due for a fortnight.

The hundred clocks of London were striking ten under the brilliant stars when I strolled into the great tap-room of the Golden Lamb, to meet a young gentleman like myself, whom I had previously encountered.

It had been a fete day of some sort and the floor of the tap-room had been strewn with new rushes. The many tables were occupied by fashionably dressed ladies, many of them vividly barouged, and the heavy, brass lamps threw a bright light upon the gay scene.

My entrance did not provoke comment. Why should it? I was nothing but a refugee, like others in the tap-room, therefore, I was on a level with some of the best of them.

I sauntered over to the only unoccupied table in the place and sat down.

Calling the tavern-draw, I ordered a tankard of ale and when it came, began to drink.

Glancing over the edge of the pewter tankard, I surveyed my companions.

The greater part of them were better dressed than myself, but I was not ashamed of my habit, and I knew there was no better sword than mine under the roof of the Golden Lamb.

Presently I was rudely jostled on my right and, upon looking up, I beheld a youngish man in maroon velvet trimmed with a profusion of gold lace.

He was a handsome lout and tittled, as I imagined from the first glance.

His dark eyes transfixed me and I noticed a proud contemptuous curling of his thin, sensual lips.

"Well, sirrree, you drink alone tonight," said he in a rasping voice. "You cannot belong to London."

I drew back in my seat, my hand on the handle of the tankard and looked into his face.

Clearly, this man wanted to insult me. I saw it in his mien.

"Peste!" cried I, "and what is it to you? Cannot one drink as he pleases in the Golden Lamb without having every velvet fool in London calling him to account?"

The pallor of the man's face grew crimson at once.

"Certes, but perhaps you know not to whom you speak so rudely," he answered.

"I do not, and little do I care."

At this, a richly dressed woman at the nearest table laughed and cried out:

"Beware, my lord! he may have a point to his sword."

The man in velvet shot the woman a quick glance and turned as suddenly to me again.

"You look like a Frenchman," said he, "and we permit none such to insult a true Briton."

By this time my blood was rushing like a current of lava through my veins and surging to my brain.

The very insolence of the man nettled me, and my hand went involuntarily to the hilt of my sword.

"I am a Frenchman!" cried I, through my teeth. "I am Noel De Bluy, and I will refuse no man satisfaction. It seems to me, sir, that you have not apologized for the rude jostling of a moment ago, and were you the high born English gentleman, as you profess to be, you will surely do so yet."

He threw his head back haughtily and laughed with wide-open mouth, at the same time displaying his faultless white teeth, while I bit my lip till it bled.

"When Leicester apologizes to a dog of a Frenchman, Hounslow Ha! will wed Queen Bess!"

In a moment I was on my feet, enraged in every fibre of my being. I saw nothing but the man in velvet and had already guessed that he was a person of distinction, although I had heard of Leicester, who was called the Queen's latest favorite.

By this time, one half of the house was breaking into an unseemly uproar and crowding forward toward my table. The women were looking on with blanched faces, so far as fear could dissipate the hues of wine.

"He will strike you, my lord," exclaimed the dame who had already spoken.

"Not on your life, Countess," laughed Leicester. "I'll take this sworded clodpoll by the ear and lead him out."

At this half a dozen young candle-wasters, dressed in velvet and all in the prevailing fashion, rushed forward, calling on Leicester to turn me over to them.

I backed from the table and had the good wall behind me. There was a door just at my left, leading, I knew not whither, for I had not yet investigated the mysteries of the Golden Lamb beyond the tap-room. I could touch this portal without so much as half straightening out my arm.

But I had other matters besides doors to think of just then. Leicester, egged on by the young fellows, came toward me, his face deeply crimson and his hand on his sword.

Now, I did not seek to fight in London. Much less did I care to cross swords with one who stood so high in the favor of Queen Bess, but my Gascon blood was up and I determined not to truckle to any one no matter what his rank or calling.

The next minute flew by like a mad second.

"I'll wipe the young bully-rook's face with my blade!" exclaimed Leicester, as he made a pass across the table which I had hastily dragged in front of me. "Beshrew me! I'll make him eat every word he has said, if he chokes on them."

The long, bright blade of the great Queen's favorite flashed in my face and I felt back, but the next moment my own

steel shot toward him and I felt its point prick his shoulder.

Not a word said I.

"Pin him to the wall! Run the frog-eater through!" came from all parts of the house.

"Had the infidel, my lord!" screamed one of the bedizened women.

Leicester was incensed enough to carry out the creature's command, but that moment I staggered him across the face with my right hand and, throwing myself bodily under and then, throwing myself bodily across the table, I landed a blow with my fist in his undecided face.

There was a howl and a tumble, half a dozen screams, a mad rush of twenty young bloods straight at me. Some one pushed the table forward, throwing me against the door, and before I could face them with my sword the door opened and I fell backward into almost joyless gloom.

CHAPTER II.

TURNED INTO THE STREET.

In another second I lay on my back, while the door had been closed and I could hear curses and pounding beyond it.

I scrambled to my feet, still holding to my sword and stood in the gloom listening to the execrations on the other side of the door.

All at once I felt a hand rudely laid on my shoulder, and I looked around but could see no one.

"This way," said a voice. "Odd's life! but you've had a narrow escape. 'Twas Leicester in the great room you picked a fight. Marry me, man, do you want to swing from a gibbet on Tyburn?"

"Not on your life," said I. "But 'the great earl' as you call him, is a brute."

"Queen's Bess, they say in secret."

"Just as if I cared what he is," I flashed. "If you will remove the barricades from you door I'll go back and fight the whole worthless crowd."

"And lose your life? Don't play the fool. This way, master."

I was dragged over some flag stones, which I could not see, and hustled down the dark narrow corridor which reeked with the smells of the kitchen.

I had observed by this time, by the tones of the voice, that I was addressed by one of the softer sex, though the voice was harsher than one finds in the drawing rooms of titled society.

I permitted myself to be conducted to the end of the passage where another door was opened. A low stone stairway, dimly lighted, and across it I perceived several rats used for the refuse of the kitchens connected with the Golden Lamb.

"They'll be here presently," said my strange friend, whom I now paid for the first time.

A likely wench, but coarse she was, as stout as a giantess, with a well rounded figure and a shock of red hair.

Darkness had facilitated combatting her, for she had great arms with muscles of steel, and I admired her pluck and grit in the light of the lantern that swung from one of the posts of the little court.

"Don't you hear them, master?" she cried, looking toward the dark corridor through which she had dragged me. "They are all friends of the great lord."

"Friends, eh?" I broke in. "St. Denis! but I owe them some blood-letting."

"Time enough for that. The way of escape is now entirely plain to me. They'll find you here if you tarry. The street is beyond. It is dark and you know your way."

"How do you know I am French?" I queried.

"Are not your people, I spent a year in your Paris."

"Your name?"

"Mistress Mog."

"English I see! Well, Mistress Mog, for your sake," I laughed to myself at my words—"I will condescend to give them warlike the go-by for the present. A door, yonder, eh? So I see. Well, good night, fewsbunch."

I plunged headlong across the little space of the court, guessing at the door that opposite before me and nearly fell into the dark narrow street.

The door changed behind me and I heard the quick shooting of a bolt.

There was no light in the narrow street into which I had now plunged. The street itself was rough and irregular, but stones which the keenest eye could not see lay in wait to entrap one.

The noise of the disturbance in the taproom of the Golden Lamb were beyond my hearing. I wondered what was occurring there. Was Leicester swearing vengeance against the dancer who had drawn about of his trusted blood, or was he laughing over the little episode of the night?

My wrath had cooled a bit better of me. I longed to look into the tap-room again.

I had also encountered my friend Piers and had gone to meet. Perchance he had made his appearance and been kicked into the street, or he had wandered on some acquaintance with De Bluy.

The second and soberer thought prevailed and I darted down the black street.

It was like threading some of the ways that lead to the Styx, but I soon came out upon another and wider thoroughfare, poorly lighted by lanterns attached to poles at certain distances.

As I looked against a house that showed no signs of being inhabited, I heard the loud voices of the night-watch and then caught the gleam of their lanterns.

I had no desire to become acquainted with the watch, to be struck over the head with the bills and then be dragged to one of the foul prisons of London, so I drew back into the mouth of the narrow street and waited.

The members of the watch were over boisterous. They were great, lusty fellows with the manners of the boor, and they made the night hideous with their talk as they approached me.

"If we could only find the fellow we would claim a goodly reward from the earl," said one.

"That we would, Tom. Leicester is close to good Queen Bess and would not hesitate to pay well for the clodpate who knocked him down in the tavern tonight."

"Well, then, let us beat around here," said another. "The prey may fall into our hands."

"They'll rouse the city, but what they catch him. And when they do, and Queen Bess hears of it, I'd not give a punched shilling for his chances."

At this they all laughed and one looked into the dark street within arm's length of me, but drew back with a grunt and the night hood passed on.

I waited till they had gone round the nearest corner, then I followed in their footsteps. All London at my heels! The thought sent a thrill through every fibre of my being. The vengeance of Queen Elizabeth! I had heard of that before. Even in Paris, I had heard terrible stories of her revenge on those who had offended her. More than one poor wretch still languished in the foul prisons of London who had crossed her path. The Virgin Queen! I laughed; she was no better than Mary, the scullion of the Golden Lamb. I thought, though she had inherited Henry's tune, as also Bolzyn's daughter.

Keeping close to the buildings and with my hand on the hilt of my sword, I hurried toward my lodgings.

It was not long when I plunged into the familiar Cheapside and turned toward my rest.

Tomorrow, nay, even yet that night, I might have all London at my heels, and that because I had struck down one of the Queen's favorite.

When I had reached the door of Mistress Bloom's house, where I lodged, I called for some one to open it. Presently I heard heavy footsteps on the stair and the bolts were growingly drawn.

I was confronted by landlady by the light of the candle she carried. Her face was white.

"You?" said she, looking me over from head to foot. "You pay in advance from today, master."

I uttered a little cry as I fell back a step. The landlady had taken refuge in the room. She last had gone to swell the profits of the landlord of the Golden Lamb.

"You cannot pay?" continued Mistress Bloom. "Then, sirree, you must hunt other lodgings."

The face and the candle vanished, the door was closed in my face, and the voice was of the obdurate bolt and turned away without a word of farewell. I had the wanted vision of a sovereign's revenge.

Was this to be the bitter fortune of the last De Bluy?

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH I MEET THE LASS O' LONDON.

A fugitive from France and but three days in London, but long enough to have the irish-hands of the city looking for me because I had struck down an insult from the Earl of Leicester, the Queen's favorite!

Curses on the luck that I found myself turned from Mistress Bloom's door with not a penny piece to jingle in my pocket.

To be sure I had a good sword at my side, but there were no wars to which I could go, and I was richer than I had ever been in the best of a bad situation.

Moreover, I had myself fallen heavily, though it was not so very late, but whither could I go?

I thought of going back and pleading for a bed for the night with my landlady, but, knowing her, I knew that would be useless. Words would prove useless; therefore, I resolved to betake myself of some other luck.

Harassed with thoughts I cannot describe, I turned away with a heavy heart and soon found myself in Ludgate street.

Here I found a few people in the show belated pedestrians the way, but they kept on together as they would not commend me to the cunning night-watch.

Truly, I was a forlorn fellow, with nowhere in all the great city of London, any time liable to be pounced upon and dragged triumphantly to jail.

Suddenly I paused and drew toward a house, as sounds of heavy footsteps reached my ears.

The next moment I knew that I was about to be set upon by a set of roysterers who were well soaked with wine, probably by the flagons that they had drunk at Leicester's.

They had broken out in a ribald song not good for pious ears and were swaggering along, making the very night hideous with their noise.

I did not fear these drunken ruffians, though I wondered what was occurring in the house from which they had issued.

I recognized that they would not see me and hugging the wall of a house, I held my breath till they had passed.

What was my astonishment when they turned and entered the door from which I

Bluy, you will be within the walls of the Tower."

I could not speak, but I looked into the deep, passionate eyes of the woman before me and shuddered.

CHAPTER V.
THE QUEEN'S REWARD.

I managed to pass the remainder of my night of adventure in a secluded place, back of a quiet little tap-room in Carter street. It was a sorry enough lodging for a scion of the house of De Bluy, but it was the best I could get, and I counted myself lucky that I was to content to find a kennel of any kind.

I fancied that my new found friend, the Countess of Bluy, would have taken me to her own fine establishment, but she feared the result should it be discovered that she harbored the man who had dared to strike Rester, Lord of Leicester.

She had parted from me assuring me of her friendship, and, at the same time, warning me to make myself as invisible as possible for some days.

In the absence of my new lodging I had fallen asleep almost as soon as touching my cot of straw, and in my dreams I saw two faces, those of Mistress Satterlee of Ludgate street and Countess Kitty.

There was something about Mistress May that reminded me of the fair women of my own country, and I saw in her a pure, angelic creature seemingly out of place amid the sins and vices of Merry England.

As for the Countess Kitty, I could not say as much for her, though she was also a ravishingly fair, but her beauty was of a contrasting sort. Both were beautiful and I laughed to myself when I thought of Noel De Bluy being crucified between two such women.

The keeper of the little tap-room was a man with some of the milk of human kindness in his make-up. He was rubicund and jolly and when he saw me enter his shop the following morning he made the best toilet I could under the circumstances, he laughed a little at me, but set me up with food and wine.

This proved very acceptable to me, though my purse was not quite so empty as it had been, thanks to Countess Kitty, and when with a lofty air I offered to pay for the savor Master Cromer refused to accept anything.

All at once he pointed to something I had not noticed till then, a something posted on the door.

"They have just put it up," said he. "There seems to be a little blood-letting last night, and my Lord Leicester got the worst of it."

Guessing what was the import of the hand-bill, I went forward and read it in silence.

It was a proclamation from Queen Bess, offering three hundred pounds for the apprehension of one certain Frenchman who had "grossly insulted and grievously wounded His Grace, the Earl of Leicester." There followed a pretty complete description, and my portrait could not be told if I kept back a smile that came to my lips while I perused the hand-bill.

They had posted me, sure enough. The high constable of London was commanded to arrest me on sight, and all the smaller fry of watchmen were ordered to be on the lookout for the bold Frenchman who had brought such disgrace upon the English nation.

I fancied that while I read, Master Cromer was examining me, and when I looked up I turned I saw him with his arms akimbo watching me from the back.

"Sir," said he, "that is the first time my Lord Leicester has met his match."

"Do you think so?" said I. "It is such a man as all that?"

"He is quick with the sword and has the strength of a young lion."

I glanced at the hand-bill again.

"Have they yet apprehended the person mentioned in the proclamation?" I queried, putting on a tone of indifference.

"Not so far as I know. One of the nightwatch came in here but this morning on the lookout for the Frenchman and said they hope to have him by high noon."

"It is something to strike one who stands in the Queen's favor?" I remarked.

"Much so, and especially Leicester. But, Master——"

I hesitated to give my real name, seeing that it would pronounce me French, but since Master Cromer had treated me with such kindness, I had not the heart to deceive him.

"De Bluy," said I.

He started a little and leaned forward, a most curious look on his face.

"I thought you were French when you came after the stroke of twelve," he said, "but that matters little with you, Monsieur," and he made obeisance. "We have a good many Frenchmen in London. Indeed, the city seems to be a good nesting place for some who are not permitted in their own country.

Just then a door behind me swung open and I caught the odor of soup from the kitchen.

"Wet you eat, Monsieur?" said Master Cromer. "My good wife has prepared an appetizing dish, and if you will you will condescend to break bread with us——"

Condescend! Why, not I was nearly famished. The fragrant odor of the soup tickled my nostrils most deliciously, and I told Master Cromer that he would place me under everlasting gratitude for the invitation.

Half a minute later I was seated at the table in the adjoining room with the burly householder before me while a woman's ingenate curiosity.

"Here is Jane," said Master Cromer, noticing her stare, "our guest will not devour you."

She pursed her lips at this and turned away for a minute, I ate in silence.

"Jotham!" suddenly cried Mistress Cromer, "is not this the man described in the hand-bill posted in the tap-room? Marry, but he seems to answer the description to a dot."

I felt my blood rush in a seething tide to my brain. The woman had discovered me!

"Really, I have not asked our guest," answered Master Cromer, in a matter-of-fact manner. "He may be the gentleman who drew a little blood from Leicester, but you know what they say about his wife, the fair Amy Robsart!"

"Yea, they hint that my Lord Leicester made way with her that he might stand next to the Queen in her best favors. But we daze not breathe such suspicion on the streets of London."

"Nay, that we dare not," said the landlord of the Red Bullock, throwing a hasty look over his shoulder.

I was about to take another dash of soup, for it was decidedly appetizing when heavy footsteps were heard in the tap-room beyond and Master Cromer sprang to his feet.

"Some nincompoop of a constable looking after the reward," smiled the good wife with a hasty glance at me. "They will beat the bush all day for you, Monsieur."

"Th a you think——"

"Certes," she put in. "A young gentleman dressed as you are would not seek the Red Bullock for lodgings unless he dared not go openly to the Swan."

From that moment I had no desire for Master Cromer's hospitality, but turned half way round on my stool and listened to the jumble of voices that came from the other room.

"It is one of the under constables," said Mistress Cromer, in a whisper. "He is not alone. Jotham will do all he can to keep him off the premises."

I was on my feet, having nearly overturned the stool in my haste, and I looked about me quickly to bay, I stood in the middle of the room with my sword half drawn.

I had resolved not to fall into the hands of the law.

I was presently relieved of my fears for the door opened and the grumpy face of the landlord of the Red Bullock made its appearance.

"Ho! you hoodwink the officious fellows!" queried Mistress Cromer.

"I did, indeed, for the good Lord pardon me for lying, Jane," was the reply. "But Monsieur is in danger. I have sent the constable away entirely satisfied. He intimated that every tavern in London would be subjected to a search on the next morning."

"Then I will not compromise you my dear landlord," said I, "I will not risk another night."

"Not in thy present garb," exclaimed Mistress Cromer. "You are of the same build as our Thomas, who is at sea, and his clothes will be a little too much for you."

"The very idea!" cried Jotham, "if Monsieur will wear them they will serve his enemies."

Twenty minutes later I stood before the landlord and his wife in their son's garments and quite altered in my appearance. I was a new and strange event in my career.

CHAPTER VI.
IN WHICH I ENCOUNTER HOUNSLOW HAL.

It was most amusing to me to walk the streets of London in the garb of Thomas the sailor, and meet the train-bands on the watch for Noel De Bluy.

I took great delight in sauntering from street to street, and I broke through the public parks, as though the said Noel was safely across the Channel.

The disguise proved perfect, and as evening came on, without having been remotely suspected of being other than a young city clerk, I strolled into Ludgate street to see what was going on in front of the domicile of Mistress Satterlee.

It was still early, though in merry May and the streets were already thronged with people, while the equipages of the aristocracy rolled by.

The shutters of the shops were not yet up and I found the windows of Master Satterlee's place filled.

The tall door stood open and I glanced inside.

Some of the shelves were resplendent with silver and gold articles of silverware, and I saw the counter where watches reposed on various pieces of velvet for purchasers, while Master Satterlee himself, stood guard over all.

The sight and the knowledge that above the shop was the abode of Mistress May interested me to the extent of a few minutes more than I should.

Suddenly Master Satterlee caught my eye and made a slight gesture of invitation after the manner of many tradesmen.

I was curious and I went inside.

"Do you not want a fine watch, sir?" Mistress Satterlee asked, bowing low. "I think you would look better with a good one on your person."

He proceeded to inspect the watches on the counter, passing from one to another, while the jeweler peered into the qualities of each.

Whilst I was thus engaged a door at one end of the shop opened and by a quick glance I caught sight of the face of Mistress May.

My heart, by one great leap seemed to bound in my throat for I began to stare at her and forget all about the watches on the shop counter.

"My dear, could you not select a proper time-piece for this young gentleman? He seems to have made up his mind and you have made some excellent selections for our customers."

"Lud!" cried the young miss, as she closed the door and advanced, "you must not choose for himself, or is he so deeply in love with some fair wench that he sees nothing else?"

I could have told her that such was indeed, the truth, but refrained and the next moment, with but a narrow counter between us, she was showing me the time-pieces and chatting volubly about them.

St. Denis! I durst not look up for fear of betraying both of us, and I wondered what the young girl must have thought of my downcast eyes.

All at once I heard a footstep at my right and then Master Satterlee gave a slight cry.

"I'll take this watch if you please, Master Satterlee," said a cool voice at my elbow and a hand shot past me and closed on one of the costliest time-pieces on the counter.

I turned to behold a handsomely dressed man of my own age standing at my side.

He wore a black hat, decorated with a feather of the white hue, and his doublet was of an olive green trimmed with silver lace. His cloak hung in its carle that he nearly kissed his shoulders, and I noticed that his sleeves had ruffs after the manner of the day.

I had never seen this foppish gallant before, but instantly I knew that he was a knight of the road who, finding the highways dull for a season, had ventured into London to carry on his nefarious work.

The face of both Mistress May and her father were now white.

"That watch, sir, is worth fifty pounds," stammered the jeweler. "It came from the famed shop of Brogard in Paris——"

"I don't care if it came from the devil's workshop," broke in the stranger. "I will take it. You can charge the bill to Noel De——"

He whirled.

"To Hounslow Hal, if you would know,' he continued, "and you will bill, Master Satterlee. If the watch doesn't keep good time I'll bring it back at the muzzle of this!"

With his last word the rascal thrust a pistol across the counter and at sight of the weapon the jeweler and his daughter fell back in terror, and I guessed it was intended to speak.

"Odds life! I keep this little call to yourself," he admonished the jeweler to the time-piece, "here's a ladies' watch for you, my dear," and he pounced upon another time-piece. "I find a new sweetheart every time I call, but I will not be the next one."

He bowed the fellow from the first, and, being without my sword, debated in my mind what to do.

"Odds life! Is this?" suddenly said the robber, turning full upon me. "You do not appear to be a match for such a looking clodpoll, sh, Master Satterlee?"

My blood rushed to my face in a hot, slurrying tide, and I must have flushed to the temples.

The robber did Master Satterlee expect to be robbed by a common night thief?" I retorted, "I will bring it back and the next minute might bring forth.

"Ha," laughed Hounslow Hal. "By my troth! you're a gay one. From what kitchen in Turnbull Alley did you unearth that?"

My face must have flushed, but weighty enough to break through the reserve of my temper.

Before the highwayman could perceive my movement I struck the blow in the face which reeled him against the side of the counter, and, dropping the watches upon the floor, I sprang forward, lifting his pistol arm, while his eyes flashed the hatred of years at me.

In another moment I had seized the fellow and, with my strength to my assistance, I bundled him across the space between me and the door and with a great effort I succeeded in pushing him into the street.

There was a heavy fall and the air for a moment resounded with oaths, but I did not follow up my victory, but turned back to the little shop with a feeling of satisfaction.

Master Satterlee came running round the counter with a great cry in his hand.

"The door—the door!" he cried. "The devil will escape, quick and murder us all!"

But, Hounslow Hal had no intention of renewing the fight. He had left the scene of his shop, for that would have created a disturbance that would have summoned the watch with half a dozen constables to the scene and ended badly for him.

He sprang to his feet after picking himself up from the gutter, and roared out his imprecations upon me as he fled down the street.

"Some other time, young dog!" he hissed. "And shall feel the teeth of Hounslow Hal. And when he is through with you, you'll wander world over in search of me. As for you, Master Satterlee, I'll take the watches some other time."

He hotted off, his fine garments much the worse for his unfortunate encounter with the walls of the gutter.

The jeweler of Ludgate street looked and looked the question when you traded clothes?"

He stopped again as if he had guessed the truth and then with a smile, when her father's back was turned for the moment, he continued in a lowered tone:

"You can depend on me. I will keep your secret. All the world in London Town cannot force me to betray you. But you are in dire peril, Monsieur, for you are the man——"

CHAPTER VII.
ENTRAPPED.

Little doubt had I that Mistress May knew that I was the person for whom all the train-bands in London were hunting.

She had penetrated my disguise, well knowing, after having seen me in the true character of Noel De Bluy, that I was not a simple Londoner, though clad in the garb of one of that ilk.

I remained in the jeweler's shop till all danger of another attack by Hounslow Hal had passed and then Master Satterlee ventured to unlock the door and let me out.

Even then I lingered for I would have speech with the fair May, but I did not deem it advantageous to stay.

I parted with her with a repetition of her promise in my ears that she would not betray me, come what might, and soon I was posting off.

Fortunately, perhaps, no watch had come up during my brief interview at the shop on Ludgate street, so that I had them to get out of sight.

I did not go back to Carter street to the Red Bullock for it was liable to search and I did not care to be found there by the constables.

As I turned into Aldersgate I nearly ran afoul of a little mob who seemed to be watching me.

He was dressed in salmon velvet with large ruffs and carried a straight sword.

This personage I had no recollection of ever seeing before, and after passing him I glanced over my shoulder and found him trailing after me like a wolf hound.

Who was he? He looked like an officer in the army and I knew that just now, with no wars to trouble her, Queen Bess's capital swarmed with soldiers.

Most of these men are swaggerers, candle-snuffers and gamblers who did not hesitate to do anything for money.

Therefore it was but natural that I should take the fellow for one of these last and, irritated by finding him at my heels, I resolved to have it out with him.

And I did to my sorrow.

Turning into Aldersgate street, I leaned slightly against a building and waited for him.

As I thought. I did not have long to wait for he came nosing round the corner and I gave him a push that was not meant to be gentle.

"What's the matter, Master Cavalier Cassingham?"

"To prevent you from running into me, as you can see."

At this he showed his teeth like a snarling wolf.

"Who are you?" he cried. "By my troth! you are a gay one. I've had a time of it watching. You are used to other feathers, my fine bird."

"Think you so? Odds fish! but you must have a keen scent."

"That I have. Come, open your waistcoat and show me your skin. It is too white and soft for a London clerk. I suspect my commission that you are the fellow who is being hunted for spitting my Lord Leicester last night."

It was out at last!

The little rage was in high glee and I caught the deep flashes of his baleful eyes.

"What ho!" he cried. "I have found as he partly turned. "This way, constable!"

I looked and saw a constable with his staff and two of the usual type of watch of his varlets about him.

"We'll soon see. Tell the truth," went on my enemy. "If you are not the man who spitted Earl Robert you will not be let go. If you turn out to be that frog eating calliff the law will take hold of you."

There was no time to parley, and before the constable came up, I might have escaped had I not been a fool and to have run for it, but that would only have darkened my case for the fellow's shouts was the only thing I could do.

I hated to be taken in so tamely. I would have put my sword to my cur with my sword with the whole posse against me.

"That man is a thief," I cried to May. The other way seemed like giving a dog's death when one has a clear blood in his veins.

However, I had but little time in which to make up my mind for I was called to make it up for surrender, seeing that I was in no position to fight.

It did not take long for the constable and his men to overtake me.

Captain Cassingham took off his hat and, bowing to the officer, pointed to me with a grin of triumph.

"You will take that fellow," said he to the constable, "that is the man you want. Any one can see that. And my word for it he is the man mentioned in Her Majesty's proclamation as the man in the mirror."

There was excitement among the band at this, and the constable at once confirmed. The constable, a long, lank fellow with a face like a fox, and a manner as vicious as a looking rapscallion he ever I laid my eyes on, stepped forward and caught my arm.

We were now in the midst of a mob in my brain and it seemed on fire.

"You are right, sir," I am not used to being handled roughly by a clodpate clothed with a little authority.

"Ho! ho!" laughed Cassingham, with a twinkle in his eyes. "What tells it. Good Monsieur Noel, why do you not? Take him, officer, and hale him to the courts."

The constable was a man grim of the constable, but that moment the men gathered round me and I found every avenue of retreat suddenly cut off.

"Hold him till he is searched," said Captain Cassingham. "Beshrew me, but he may have poison on his person!"

I still possessed some of the money given me by Countess Kitty and one or two little articles that I did not belong to the son of the old couple at the Red Bullock.

My hands were held at my back while the little captain went through me with the dexterity of a professional pick-pocket.

"You've picked gentlemen's pockets before, I perceive," said I, sharply. "You ought to connect with Hounslow Hal or the other light-fingered men of the road."

The members of the posse laughed at my

(Continued on page fourteen.)

...BY... WILLIAM WALLACE COOK.

OLD ECKERSAL'S DEPUTY;

...OR... A STRANGE ROMANCE OF THE WEST.

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CHAPTER VII.

"You—Nita's father!" burst from Lindsay.

"Didn't you suspect as much when I told you my name on the flume?" asked the other. "My name is Philip Mortimer," he added to Eckersal, "and I can prove my case before any court in the land."

"You'll never have the chance," said Lindsay, grimly.

"No? That is a point, I think, for Eckersal to consider."

There was a menace in Mortimer's voice that brought a blaze of anger into Lindsay's eyes. He stepped toward the man, but Eckersal stepped in front of him.

"Gently, Mort, gently," said the Sheriff. "We'll settle this matter of the man's identity before we do anything else."

Lindsay seated himself and Eckersal walked into a rear room. Presently he emerged with a photograph and a bundle of letters tied with a faded blue ribbon.

"These," said he, addressing the prisoner, "were found among the effects of Nita's mother. Nita has been searching for them, hoping against hope that her father would some day come."

"And hoping, too," put in Lindsay, "that her father would be some one she might be proud of. He started hard at the prisoner and turned away with a shudder. "My God!" he muttered.

Eckersal's hands shook a little as he held the photograph and looked back and forth from the pictured face to the face of the prisoner. At last he dropped the photograph, again seated himself on the corner of the table and eyed Mortimer fixedly.

"I'm not quite so good in any test you want to try," said Mortimer.

"These letters," proceeded Eckersal, picking up the packet from the table and untying them, "are letters written to Mrs. Mortimer by her husband. Although it was young as if you are really the man you should be able to remember the contents of some of them."

"Your deputy has another bundle of letters written to me by my wife," retorted Mortimer. "I think you will find that the correspondence dovetails together in such a way that will leave no doubt as to who I am."

Lindsay took the damp packet from his pocket and, with it, he brought out the letter containing Sanderson's gold, laying both on the table.

"Let him tell what's in Mrs. Mortimer's letters, Dan," said the Deputy. "This man's a thief and he may have stolen the letters. Just laid on the table. But if he can tell what's in Mrs. Mortimer's letters—"

"Go back and sit down, Mort," interrupted Dan Eckersal.

Lindsay returned to his chair and Eckersal began untying the water-soaked packet. The Sheriff's face was impassive. Alone, alone, knew conflicting emotions were warring in his soul.

Nita could not have been nearer to him had she been of his own flesh and blood. Friendship and love for the young woman could prove his case racked and tortured Eckersal as nothing else could have done.

Every one of the letters in the packet taken from Mortimer was postmarked at Dodge City, Kansas. Eckersal compared the writing with a few faded words on the back of Sanderson's photograph.

One by one the Sheriff opened the missives, spreading each sheet carefully out on his knee and examining it critically. As he proceeded, a great sympathy rose up in his heart and was reflected in his face.

For the most part, the letters were appeals for the husband to change his ways, to forsake a life as degrading as it was dishonest and return to her. The very last letter was filled with a spirit of thankfulness and hope.

"You say for me to go to O'Kee, Phil," the letter ran, in part, "and that you will join me there as soon as you can get matters adjusted. I thank God that my appeals have brought you to this decision, and that you shall start for O'Kee at once. Oh, if I could but impress you with the happiness that thrills me as I write! Life has brighter things in store for us, dear—I know it. I feel it every time I think of you. You can help you to live down the past, and I shall devote the remainder of my life to that one purpose.

Tenderly, reverently, Eckersal again bound the packet of letters together and laid them aside. As for the bundle bound with the faded blue ribbon, he had gone over that so often with Nita that he knew its contents almost by heart.

So she had taken her worded his letters that there was nothing in them to suggest the knave and cricketer. Possibly those which bore more plainly upon this point had been destroyed by his wife.

Eckersal questioned the prisoner and found him equipped with a surprisingly good memory. More than twelve years had passed since he had written those treasured letters to his wife, yet he was able to repeat their contents in general terms.

"What business did you follow at the time you wrote those letters," Eckersal asked, finally.

"The one I have followed ever since," replied Mortimer. "My stock in trade is a deck of cards."

"A blackleg!" muttered Lindsay.

"Occasionally members of my profession have been referred to in that way," admitted the prisoner glibly.

"Why did you not join your wife in O'Kee, as you promised?" demanded Eckersal.

"It was impossible for me to break away from the old life. That was one thing. For another, my liberty was curtailed and to come to O'Kee was physically impossible."

"You were arrested?"

"I was sent to the penitentiary for a term of years," said the prisoner unblushingly. "When I had served my time I drifted back into the old life."

"And never had a thought of your wife and daughter?"

"I thought it best that they should forget me."

"But you experienced a change of heart," observed Eckersal. "After a great many years you have come to O'Kee to make yourself known?"

"It was a natural desire—for you to think so."

"A natural desire—for you—to wish to profit by your daughter's prosperity."

"Well, I did think of that. I had small hope, however, of finding either my wife or daughter when I came to this section. If fortune favored me and I found them, or either of them, it was in my mind to be different."

"And you began being different by committing a robbery and a murder while on your way to my house to let your daughter know of your coming!"

"It was the influence of the old life, Eckersal—once a rogue, always a rogue. I had been borne in on me that I am too old to change."

Eckersal walked slowly to the shelf over the fireplace, possessed himself of a pipe of tobacco and began filling it. He was thinking, and thinking deeply.

"I have a proposition to make you," began the prisoner, looking at a clock on the opposite wall. "If you—"

"I don't want to hear a proposition from you, just yet," broke in the Sheriff, then added to his deputy: "Dan, you and I and Mort, and the the prisoner in his chair."

"If you keep my here too long," spoke up Mortimer, "I will be forced to take the matter into my own hands."

Eckersal understood this phase of the matter, as Lindsay had fully explained what his meeting with Hughes on Saddleback Mountain might signify.

"No mob will take you away from me!" declared Eckersal. "Although it was young as if you are really the man you should be able to remember the contents of some of them."

"Your deputy has another bundle of letters written to me by my wife," retorted Mortimer. "I think you will find that the correspondence dovetails together in such a way that will leave no doubt as to who I am."

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"Why did you not join your wife in O'Kee, as you promised?" demanded Eckersal.

"It was impossible for me to break away from the old life. That was one thing. For another, my liberty was curtailed and to

"If he's such a contemptible cur as to let that make any difference with him," came scathingly from Lindsay, "he not the man for Nita."

"You don't look at it right, my lad. From what I've heard about this bone-headed Eastern stock, they're mighty jealous of the standing of their family connections. You may be Edgerton both. If Nita is to be happy we've got to consider the feelings of Edgerton's folks. The thing for us to do is to keep this prisoner from making himself known. Nita and Effie, being in Prisco for a while, will help us. But here's Edgerton, over at the Post. If the prisoner should ever get word to his cure—"

"Of course, we can keep the fellow's letters. That will shut out the evidence in the case. But, if he talks, he's going to stir things up, all the same."

Lindsay had nothing to say. He was not in accord with Eckersal's reasoning, although ready and willing to do whatever would make for Nita's happiness.

"I don't like the work, Dan," repeated Eckersal, "for it looks underhand, and I think you know me well enough, Mort, to know that I don't like to do underhand things. But in doing my best to keep the prisoner's story away from Nita we are in conflict with my duty as sheriff, and, besides, it may mean everything to the girl."

Lindsay maintained silence.

"Have you any ides what sort of a proposition the prisoner wants to make?" asked Eckersal.

"No," answered Lindsay, shortly.

"Now that you understand the situation, we'll go back and finish our talk with him. Mort, you and Effie hang out at the Bar-O-Tarkus—it's safer than the one at O'Kee."

Eckersal arose and went to the door. He opened it and passed into the front room, followed by his second deputy. The prisoner was lone as he had been left.

"Time is slipping away, Eckersal," said Mortimer, "and I figured that I'd had about five hours' grace. If I'm to get that long I'd better make use of my play safely inside of those five hours."

"The play we're going to make," replied the Sheriff, as he saddle up and take you to Tarkus, ten miles off. It's a larger town than O'Kee, and a safer place."

Mortimer smiled inscrutably. Eckersal went on.

"You spoke of a proposition. You're in the clutches of the law and in no position to make propositions. But I'm curious to hear what you have to say."

"I'll make my proposition in a few words," answered Mortimer. "You are to give me a good horse, Eckersal, give me a supply of provisions and allow me a fair start for the Canada line. Trust me to keep going. That would suit you to a that, I'm thinking, than allow Nita to discover the story will reach her."

"The Sheriff's face hardened.

"You've offered me a big bribe to play false to my trust, Mortimer. Do you really know anything about—but it won't work. Nita shall never know."

Eckersal spoke in a way that left no doubt as to his determination in the matter.

"Then you can bank on one thing, Eckersal," returned the prisoner, "and that is that I'm going to get away. You cannot know exactly who I am. Even if the mob has hold of the wrong man, I'll be safe from myself. Nita will learn that you had a chance to save her father and failed to do it."

A storm of words burst from Lindsay's lips, but Eckersal checked the protest, and he was caught and stayed by Eckersal.

"Help your deputy, Lindsay!" commanded Eckersal. "I know what to do and you can count on me to do it."

Lindsay, breathing savage glances at the prisoner, drew sullenly away, a fell of bitterly slapping both arms from without. The sound increased in volume and Mortimer's face went white.

"The mob!" he gasped.

Eckersal leaped to the door, threw aside the bar and jerked it open. After a time, detenting a minute he turned sharply toward the prisoner.

"There are only two horses coming," said he. "If it's Sanderson's friends they're coming for you, Mortimer, and I don't believe it's the mob. Hughes hasn't had time to get word of your capture to Weatherby and the rest."

"Now he met Weatherby and the others on the trail," answered Lindsay, "and they'll have to go clear to O'Kee."

The Sheriff made no reply when a shrill, feminine voice rose high over the rattle of hoofs from the south.

"Dan! Is that you, Dan?"

A startled exclamation dropped from the Sheriff's lips and he ran out, then pulling through Lindsay's face.

"Nita!" muttered the Deputy.

"Get the prisoner into a rear room, quick!" said Eckersal to Lindsay. "Lock the door of the room, too, and keep the scoundrel quiet if you have to gag him. Nita and Edgerton are coming and there's something in the wind or they'd never so riding like that."

Eckersal stepped out into the darkness, pulling the door shut behind him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MOB.

"Nita!" exclaimed the Sheriff, as the riders halted in front of the house. "Why are you back here again? What has gone wrong?"

The horses were winded and staggering. Nita slipped from her saddle and flew to Eckersal.

"Dan!" she cried; "did Mort bring a prisoner here tonight?"

"Yes."

"The man that killed Sanderson?"

"Yes."

"And the prisoner is in the house, now?"

"Mort has him in one of the back rooms."

"Well, get him away, quick. Hughes, Weatherby, Grove, and a lot more of Sanderson's friends are coming this way and they mean trouble." She caught the Sheriff's arm in her anxiety and eagerness. "Do you hear, Dan? There is no time to lose, not a minute. Lieutenant Edgerton and I are only a little way ahead of the mob. Oh, hurry, hurry!"

The girl half sobbed the words. Overcome by the fears and excitement of the moment, she swayed and would have fallen.

"What Nita says is true, Eckersal," spoke up Edgerton, leaping from his horse to help her. "I tried to persuade her not to take this ride—told her that I could bring the message just as well as for both of us to come—but she wouldn't hear to it. Your sister is back at Sanderson's."

"I won't give up the prisoner—"

"Then you'll have a fight on your hands if you can't get him out of the way."

"Oh, Dan, Dan," whispered the girl herself against the Sheriff and with her arms around his neck, "you mustn't try to stand off that mob!"

"It is my sworn duty to protect the prisoner, Nita," replied Eckersal, calmly. His voice betrayed a thousand things but nervousness. "You and Nita must remount and ride on, Lieutenant. I must have her here while—"

"I'm going to stay right here with you, Dan," said Nita firmly.

"There's danger, girl; you could be of no earthly help and would only complicate the situation."

"If Sanderson's friends know that I am in the house it may keep them from going too far."

Mad for vengeance, as they are, nothing could restrain them. Your presence would tempt them."

"Our horses are spent, Eckersal," put in Edgerton. "There's not a quarter of a mile left to either of us."

"My horse is at the barn, and Lindsay's is probably there, too. Take the choice of us can give a good account of ourselves. If Weatherby and his party are in command they'll have to put Mort and me out of the game before they get at you."

Nita opened the door and hurried into the house, followed by Edgerton. Eckersal listened until he'd heard the hoofbeats die on the crest of a hill against a background of starlit sky, then he turned along Crooked Creek and barred the door.

Nita had thrown aside her wraps. Although her face was pale her dark eyes were gleaming resolutely.

Eckersal walked to a pair of stag horns over the fireplace, took down a Winchester rifle and examined the load. Lindsay, coming in one corner was the gun the Sheriff had but recently placed there on returning from the mob-led foray along Kingfisher Creek.

"Look over there, Nita," he ordered, pointing to the angle of the stone fireplace. "If anything should go wrong and I'm forced during this matter to an issue, you will be behind a breastwork and comparatively safe."

The girl could not help but smile at the place indicated.

"You don't find out that the mob was coming this way in O'Kee, did you Edgerton?" inquired Eckersal.

"No," the officer replied. "The buckboard in which Nita and your sister were going to Sanderson's ranch was the first news to Sharp's ranch. While we were there Weatherby and the rest came on. Grove was with and a man Nita said was from Hughes, galloped in from the north.

"Nita talked with Weatherby and the others in front of Spencer's cabin and we learned what was said. Then we had learned that Lindsay had captured the slayer of Sanderson and was taking him to O'Kee. Weatherby swore he had not reached Spencer's as yet, and a man was riding back toward O'Kee to hurry them along.

"At Nita's request I slipped out at the rear of the house, got my horse and one of Spencer's and we started back to warn you."

Just at that moment the galloping hoofs came to a halted at Eckersal's door. Sounds indicating that a horse was dismounting were heard, then a voice—the voice of Weatherby—rose high and harsh on the air.

"Surround the house, boys! Stand clear in case we're not to leave a couple of men to sit through. It's dark as you'll have to keep your eyes skinned."

Movement in the mob followed on all sides of the house, indicating that the leaders were directing the help executed. Then a bluff knock fell on the door.

"Well?" called Eckersal. "Who's there and what do you want?"

"Howdy, Dan," was wafted from without. "I reckon you know, an' maybe you'll be able to reckernize mine, eh?"

"Tell me what you want, Weatherby," answered Eckersal.

"Mort's in there, ain't he, and that varmint that done for Sanderson last night?"

"What of it?"

"Jest this, Dan: We want that man an' we're goin' to have him."

Eckersal motioned to Edgerton to blow out the light. Another moment and the room was plunged into darkness.

"You know that I'm sheriff, don't you, Zack?" said Eckersal, coolly.

"Sure; all we want is to save you a little trouble, an' the county a hull lot of expense. That's all."

"You'll only make trouble for all of us, Zack, by tryin' to take the man away from me."

"You won't give him up?"

"No."

"There's a half dozen of us out here."

"I don't care how many there are of you. You voters have been electing me sheriff of this county, term after term, you put me in office, and I've sworn to do my duty to the best of my judgement and ability. That's how I stand."

"But there's such a clear case ag'in that prisoner—"

"The law will take care of him," interrupted the Sheriff, sternly.

"Law be hanged! We're able to take care of him, we're goin' to. It's no use to try to give him up peaceably, or have him taken away from you!"

"Open the bull whenever you get good and ready, Zack," replied Eckersal, grimly. "As soon as Mort and I have life enough to protect the prisoner we're going to do it."

"There are three men here who will help to protect the prisoner," spoke up Edgerton. "I am an officer from the Post, Weatherby, and if bloodshed comes out of this, a file of soldiers will march over to French Creek and take care of you and your friends."

A defiant oath was Weatherby's reply to this threat. He and his men were not in a temper to permit them to think of possible consequences.

"Zack!" called Nita, rising and looking through the gloom toward the outside door. A startled exclamation fell from Weatherby's lips.

"Is that you, Nita?" he returned. "We thought you an' Dan's sister were in O'Kee, enroute to Princo."

"No, Zack," answered Nita, her voice thrilling with a new-born hope. "Louise went Edgerton and I are in here with Dan. You surely won't do any fighting, Zack? You wouldn't put me in danger, would you?"

Nita was a general favorite throughout the district. Her history was known to most of the miners and, in a way, they all looked upon her as their protegee.

In a time of accident or sickness she was among the first to visit the rude cabins and, like a ministering angel, always remained until she knew the worst. She had nursed Jack, himself, through an attack of mountain fever.

For a time the besiegers were at a loss. Weatherby held a consultation with some of the others, and presently returned with a proposition.

"We're bound to have that prisoner, Dan," said he, "but there ain't one of us out here but would give his life for Nita. The gal brought you the news that we was comin', more'n likely, but that was only natural, an' we don't lay it up ag'in her.

"She can leave the shanty before we begin proceedin's. That'll be best all around if you're set on holdin' out ag'inst us, Dan. Nita groped her way to where Dan was standing.

"Dan," she whispered, excitedly, "what sort of a looking man is this prisoner? Could he be smuggled out of the house in place of me? If he could disguise himself in a dress of mine, or Effie's——"

The cleverness of the ruse was beyond dispute, but if which he practicable, for Mortimer was slender and not above medium height.

"That's a happy thought, Nita," Eckersal whispered back. "I'll bet it was a winner. Leave the arrangements to me."

"What do you think of that, Dan?" Weatherby called immediately. "If you're bound to make a fight of it, that's the only way to get Nita where she'll be safe."

"I can't let her go away alone at this time of the night," declared Sheriff. "What you ride with her back to Spencer's cabin, Weatherby?"

"I got to stay right here—you know that as well as I do," answered Weatherby.

"Send one of your men with her."

"I'm if'ble to need all the men that's with me. Why don't you send Mort or that officer from the Post?"

It was evident that Weatherby thought Eckersley by his suggestion, was trying to diminish the ranks of the besiegers. The counter suggestion—which was just what Eckersal was angling for—was equally calculated to diminish the ranks of the besieged.

"You're fixing to leave a few less of us in here to guard the prisoner," cried the Sheriff, with feigned anger.

"What's that's the situation," returned Weatherby, 'an' you can take it, or leave it. We want to do what we can for Nita, that's all, but we'll git a grip on that pris'ner if we have to burn your house to do it."

"I won't let Nita cross Saddleback Mountain alone at this time of night," went on Eckersal, "and if you don't think enough of her safety to spare one of your men to go with her, I'll have to spare one of mine." He turned toward the place where Edgerton was standing. "Lieutenant Edgerton," he asked, "will you take Nita back to Spencer's?"

"I stand ready to do whatever you think is best, Eckersal," replied the officer, who had caught the drift of Nita's plan and of the Sheriff's method in carrying it out.

Eckersal was afflicted with stupidity. He allowed Mort to accompany the disguised prisoner. Feared a suspicion of the truth would be born in the minds of Weatherby and his followers before the Deputy and the prisoner could get safely away.

On the other hand, if Edgerton accompanied the prisoner it might be that the truth regarding the prisoner would come out. Eckersal had had but a moment to make up his mind, and in that moment he had decided to let Edgerton go with the prisoner.

"Nita will have to get ready for the ride, Weatherby," Eckersal went on to the leader of the mob.

"It won't take her long to do that," answered Weatherby. "There are two horses out here and she must have come in on one of 'em."

"She's pretty well tired out by her trip from Spencer's, but she'll be ready in a little while. You might send one of your men to the stable after two fresher mounts."

"I'll attend to that. While I'm about it, you hustle things up. We don't want to lose any more time than we have to."

Eckersal drew close to Edgerton.

"You understand that the prisoner is to go out in place of Nita, don't you?" he asked, in a low tone.

"Yes."

"I'd have Mort go, but it would look suspicious and might spoil everything. You can take care of the man all right, can't you?"

"I should hope so. He ought to be willing to do what he can to help himself out of this fix."

"He's an ornery rogue, and it's hard to tell what he'll think, or try to do. You'll have to start for Spencer's, of course, but don't go there. The prisoner must go to Tarkan, and not to O'Kee. Bear off from the O'Kee trail on the other side of Saddleback Mountain."

"As soon as Mort and I can get rid of Weatherby and the rest we'll join you at Nugent's on the Tarkus trail. Wait there for us. If Mort isn't able to take the ride, I'll come there ready."

"What is the matter with Mort, Dan?" put in Nita, quickly.

"He had a hard time of it capturing the prisoner, Nita," replied Eckersal.

"Is he seriously hurt? Why didn't you tell me about this before, Dan. I must go to him, and——"

"You'll do nothing of the kind, Nita," said Eckersal, firmly. "Mort is all right. You and Edgerton stay here while I go and help him get the prisoner ready."

Eckersal groped his way to the door of the room where Lindsay was guarding the prisoner. He knocked softly and Lindsay admitted him.

"Close and fasten the door again, Mort," the Sheriff whispered. Then he drew the shade at the window and lighted a candle.

CHAPTER X.

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The Sheriff's sister was a larger woman than Nita, and one of her gowns was used to disguise the prisoner. The deficiencies of the make-up were partly covered by a shawl, thrown over the prisoner's head and shoulders.

At best, however, it was a very inadequate disguise, but, in the dark, Eckersal felt that it might pass. When all was ready Eckersal thrust one of his revolvers into Lindsay's hand.

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"I know," interrupted the Deputy. "If he breathes so much as a whisper I'll take care of him."

The deadly menace in the Deputy's tone did not escape Mortimer. As a final precaution the prisoner's hands were manacled.

Another moment and the candle was extinguished, the door was opened and the three shuffled into the front room. An impatient stamping of horses could be heard at the entrance to the house.

"Are the horses ready, Zack?" inquired Eckersal in a loud voice.

"Ready an' waitin'," came from Zack Weatherby.

"And when we open the door," went on Eckersal, "I suppose you're ready and waiting to charge into the house with your men."

"No sech thing!" was the indignant response. "We're goin' to let Nita get safely away before we open our play."

"I can't trust you, Zack. You'll have to get off a hundred feet from the door so I can be certain of you."

"And while we're standin' back," taunted Weatherby, "you come out with the pris'ner an' make a bolt. It won't work, Dan."

"Keep your guns trained on us, then you can make short work of it if we attempt to bolt."

"You light a lantern," returned Weatherby after a moment's thought, "an' then when this officer chap an' Nita come out, we can see 'em plain enough to make sure o' what you're doin'."

"Your horse is somewhere outside."

"If you'll only make trouble for all of us, Zack, by tryin' to take the man away from me."

"You won't give him up?"

"No."

"There's a half dozen of us out here."

"I don't care how many there are of you. You voters have been electing me sheriff of this county, term after term, you put me in office, and I've sworn to do my duty to the best of my judgement and ability. That's how I stand."

"But there's such a clear case ag'in that prisoner—"

"The law will take care of him," interrupted the Sheriff, sternly.

"Law be hanged! We're able to take care of him, we're goin' to. It's no use to try to give him up peaceably, or have him taken away from you!"

"Open the bull whenever you get good and ready, Zack," replied Eckersal, grimly. "As soon as Mort and I have life enough to protect the prisoner we're going to do it."

"There are three men here who will help to protect the prisoner," spoke up Edgerton. "I am an officer from the Post, Weatherby, and if bloodshed comes out of this, a file of soldiers will march over to French Creek and take care of you and your friends."

A defiant oath was Weatherby's reply to this threat. He and his men were not in a temper to permit them to think of possible consequences.

"Zack!" called Nita, rising and looking through the gloom toward the outside door. A startled exclamation fell from Weatherby's lips.

"Is that you, Nita?" he returned. "We thought you an' Dan's sister were in O'Kee, enroute to Princo."

"No, Zack," answered Nita, her voice thrilling with a new-born hope. "Louise went Edgerton and I are in here with Dan. You surely won't do any fighting, Zack? You wouldn't put me in danger, would you?"

Nita was a general favorite throughout the district. Her history was known to most of the miners and, in a way, they all looked upon her as their protegee.

In a time of accident or sickness she was among the first to visit the rude cabins and, like a ministering angel, always remained until she knew the worst. She had nursed Jack, himself, through an attack of mountain fever.

For a time the besiegers were at a loss. Weatherby held a consultation with some of the others, and presently returned with a proposition.

"We're bound to have that pris'ner, Dan," said he, "but there ain't one of us out here but would give his life for Nita. The gal brought you the news that we was comin', more'n likely, but that was only natural, an' we don't lay it up ag'in her.

"She can leave the shanty before we begin proceedin's. That'll be best all around if you're set on holdin' out ag'inst us, Dan. Nita groped her way to where Dan was standing.

"Dan," she whispered, excitedly, "what sort of a looking man is this prisoner? Could he be smuggled out of the house in place of me? If he could disguise himself in a dress of mine, or Effie's——"

The cleverness of the ruse was beyond dispute, but if which he practicable, for Mortimer was slender and not above medium height.

"That's a happy thought, Nita," Eckersal whispered back. "I'll bet it was a winner. Leave the arrangements to me."

"What do you think of that, Dan?" Weatherby called immediately. "If you're bound to make a fight of it, that's the only way to get Nita where she'll be safe."

"I can't let her go away alone at this time of the night," declared Sheriff. "What you ride with her back to Spencer's cabin, Weatherby?"

"I got to stay right here—you know that as well as I do," answered Weatherby.

"Send one of your men with her."

"I'm if'ble to need all the men that's with me. Why don't you send Mort or that officer from the Post?"

It was evident that Weatherby thought Eckersley by his suggestion, was trying to diminish the ranks of the besiegers. The counter suggestion—which was just what Eckersal was angling for—was equally calculated to diminish the ranks of the besieged.

"You're fixing to leave a few less of us in here to guard the prisoner," cried the Sheriff, with feigned anger.

"What's that's the situation," returned Weatherby, 'an' you can take it, or leave it. We want to do what we can for Nita, that's all, but we'll git a grip on that pris'ner if we have to burn your house to do it."

"I won't let Nita cross Saddleback Mountain alone at this time of night," went on Eckersal, "and if you don't think enough of her safety to spare one of your men to go with her, I'll have to spare one of mine." He turned toward the place where Edgerton was standing. "Lieutenant Edgerton," he asked, "will you take Nita back to Spencer's?"

"I stand ready to do whatever you think is best, Eckersal," replied the officer, who had caught the drift of Nita's plan and of the Sheriff's method in carrying it out.

Eckersal was afflicted with stupidity. He allowed Mort to accompany the disguised prisoner. Feared a suspicion of the truth would be born in the minds of Weatherby and his followers before the Deputy and the prisoner could get safely away.

On the other hand, if Edgerton accompanied the prisoner it might be that the truth regarding the prisoner would come out. Eckersal had had but a moment to make up his mind, and in that moment he had decided to let Edgerton go with the prisoner.

"Nita will have to get ready for the ride, Weatherby," Eckersal went on to the leader of the mob.

"It won't take her long to do that," answered Weatherby. "There are two horses out here and she must have come in on one of 'em."

"She's pretty well tired out by her trip from Spencer's, but she'll be ready in a little while. You might send one of your men to the stable after two fresher mounts."

"I'll attend to that. While I'm about it, you hustle things up. We don't want to lose any more time than we have to."

Eckersal drew close to Edgerton.

"You understand that the prisoner is to go out in place of Nita, don't you?" he asked, in a low tone.

"Yes."

"I'd have Mort go, but it would look suspicious and might spoil everything. You can take care of the man all right, can't you?"

"I should hope so. He ought to be willing to do what he can to help himself out of this fix."

"He's an ornery rogue, and it's hard to tell what he'll think, or try to do. You'll have to start for Spencer's, of course, but don't go there. The prisoner must go to Tarkan, and not to O'Kee. Bear off from the O'Kee trail on the other side of Saddleback Mountain."

"As soon as Mort and I can get rid of Weatherby and the rest we'll join you at Nugent's on the Tarkus trail. Wait there for us. If Mort isn't able to take the ride, I'll come there ready."

"What is the matter with Mort, Dan?" put in Nita, quickly.

"He had a hard time of it capturing the prisoner, Nita," replied Eckersal.

"Is he seriously hurt? Why didn't you tell me about this before, Dan. I must go to him, and——"

"You'll do nothing of the kind, Nita," said Eckersal, firmly. "Mort is all right. You and Edgerton stay here while I go and help him get the prisoner ready."

Eckersal groped his way to the door of the room where Lindsay was guarding the prisoner. He knocked softly and Lindsay admitted him.

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"You light a lantern," returned Weatherby after a moment's thought, "an' then when this officer chap an' Nita come out, we can see 'em plain enough to make sure o' what you're doin'."

"You'll drew off!"

"Yes, providin' you bring the lantern. An' don't forget that we've got the drop on all that takes place in front o' this cabin."

Edgerton stepped to the prisoner's side and that could not fail to reach the men outside.

"Yes," Nita answered.

Eckersal drew open the door and stood for a space contemplating the situation in front of the house. Two or three shadowy figures hovered spectre-like in the distant gloom.

"Come on, girl," said he, stepping outside.

Edgerton came out in the manner and assisted him to the back of one of the horses, Mort standing in the doorway with the lantern. It was a dramatic moment, pregnant with dire possibilities.

One ridiculous word, a single false move, a shift of the lantern so that its light fell upon the disguised prisoner's face, would have precipitated a tragedy.

Edgerton mounted, took the bits of the prisoner's horse and together they rode off along the O'Kee trail. No attempt was made to halt them and Lindsay and Eckersal sprang back into the cabin and slammed the door.

"They got away safely?" queried Nita, breathlessly.

"Yes," replied Lindsay.

"After they get a good start on the road," added Eckersal, "we'll let Weatherby know how he has been outwitted. Until then, we must do our best to stave off a fight."

As Eckersal finished speaking Lindsay sprang forward and dropped a hand on Eckersal's arm.

"Listen!" he cried hoarsely. "I heard a shot—three, another one!"

All three in the cabin heard the second report. It came from the west, from the direction taken by Edgerton and the prisoner, and was followed by distant cries.

The besiegers were seen to be running to their horses and riding at speed along the O'Kee trail.

"It's all up with the prisoner!" exclaimed Eckersal. "Come with me, Mort; we'll have to find out what's happened."

Once more they hurried out into the night and made their way as rapidly as possible in the direction from which the firing and excited cries had come. A horse galloped wildly past them.

"My horse," said Eckersal, as he hurried on. "Edgerton was riding him."

Perplexed and alarmed, they came presently upon a second horse at the bridle on which Edgerton was sitting in front of him, on horseback, was Tom Hughes.

"Are you hurt, Edgerton?" asked Eckersal.

"No; the——"

"Where is the prisoner?"

"When I was unhorsed he managed to get away. Weatherby and the others are following him."

"What happened?"

"We encountered Hughes, here, and two other men. They came upon us suddenly and discovered the trick we were playing to get the prisoner away. There was a little wild shooting, my horse got the cinche broke and I slid off with the saddle. The prisoner galloped on, followed by the two men who had come with Hughes."

"They were some more of Anderson's friends," explained Hughes. "We were going to help Weatherby and the rest. It my horse hadn't been fagged, I'd be taking a hand in the pursuit right now."

"Your horse will do for you, Hughes," said Eckersal, taking the animal by the bits. "I can use him until I am able to find a fresher mount. Get on!"

The Sheriff had a right which Hughes recognized. Hughes dismounted and Eckersal climbed into the saddle.

"This is bad business," observed Eckersal, "and if the prisoner has escaped Sanderson's officious friends are the cause of it. You and Edgerton go back to the house, Mort. There is nothing further that either of you can do."

The Sheriff rode on along the trail, Hughes started for the cabin and the French Creek and Lindsay and Edgerton made their way back to Eckersal's house.

The Deputy was downcast, Dan disappointed, at Mortimer's escape. For Nita's sake, he hoped the prisoner might find liberty.

"Did the prisoner have anythin' to say to you, Edgerton, after you left the house?" Lindsay inquired.

"No." Edgerton answered, in some surprise. "Why do you ask?"

Lindsay drew a breath of relief.

"I was just curious to know, that's all."

By that time they were again at the house. In her anxiety Nita had risen and stepped inside, an exclamation escaped from his lips and his heart leaped into his throat.

Nita sat by the table, her head bowed forward on her arms. The letters taken from the prisoner, some of them spread out as though they had just been read, lay in confusion on the table.

There was the picture there, also, as well as the envelope with the faded 2-cent ribbon which Nita had long treasured. Had these exhibits in the case against Nita Eckersal in the exciting events connected with the coming of the mob, enabled Nita to arrive at the truth concerning Mortimer?

CHAPTER XI.

THE INEVITABLE.

"Why, Nita!" exclaimed Edgerton, shocked to find the girl in such deep grief "what has happened?"

He took a step toward her but was stayed by Lindsay.

"Edgerton," said the Deputy, "your horse is somewhere and I guess he has life enough left in him to carry you back to Spencer's. I think you had better be on the way. Remaining I'll see that Nita gets to Spencer's and then she and Effie can go to Princo."

Edgerton was astounded at the Deputy's summary manner of disposing of him. He was about to protest when he understood Lindsay to Nita.

"Come on," proceeded Lindsay, starting for the door, "I'll help you catch up your horse."

"No!" The word came sharply from Nita, and she raised a pitiful, tear-stained face toward Lindsay. "Dan, I want you to permit Edgerton to remain here. Mort—for a little while—is not to go. I want to ask you some questions, Mort."

Lindsay's heart was heavy. Nita had lighted the lamp in order to facilitate her reading of the letters, and the Deputy came to a halt, puzzled and wondering.

"Where did these letters come from, Mort?" Nita asked her hand on the papers scattered over the table top.

"Dan has had 'em for some time," Lindsay answered, "but I don't know where he got 'em—I guess he can tell you if you ask him."

"In capturing this—this prisoner," said Nita, in a low voice, "you had some trouble, didn't you, Mort?"

"A little."

"Was that what it was?"

"Well, we tumbled into the Tuolumne country where he was, and—and——" Lindsay hesitated, then grew silent.

"These letters are wet," returned Nita. "Dan has not had them very long, and they must have been about the prisoner when you and he fell into the flume. Dan and you and the prisoner were in this room when Lieutenant Edgerton and I came. These letters and that photograph were on the table. Oh, Mort, Mort! Why do you try to conceal the prisoner's identity from me?"

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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Don't criticise your neighbor; set him an example.

One way to get out of a tight place is to sober up.

An empty purse is no evidence of an empty head.

One of the things you can't buy on credit is experience.

No man can approve of flirting—unless he is in on the deal.

Most real-estate investors draw the line at cemetery grounds.

When an optimist gets the worst of it he makes the best of it.

Nature would be ashamed to try to imitate some brands of art.

It's pretty hard to be dishonest and good natured at the same time.

Even a wise man and his money are soon parted by the undertaker.

Money doesn't grow on trees, but much of it is obtained by grafting.

But the man who lives upright is apt to die in a horizontal position.

Why doesn't the stage use its own wings in an attempt to elevate itself?

The persistent man accomplishes a lot of things that are not worth while.

Failing in love doesn't make a man foolish unless he has other weak spots.

Just because the worst never happens some people are greatly disappointed.

Few men who makes fools of themselves can refrain from advertising the fact.

There are some people who never think of heaven except when they see a graveyard.

A woman, as a rule, has more patience with her children than with her husband.

It used to be a popular fallacy that sense came with age and wisdom with experience.

Most men are qualified to occupy apartments in a lunatic asylum—and they can prove it.

A good memory is one that enables a man to forget the things he doesn't care to recollect.

You may come out on top, but bear in mind that the wortiness froth on a glass of beer does the same.

The wise young man keeps both eyes on the small boy with whose big sister he wants to face the parson.

About the best any woman can do when she attempts to make a fool of a man is to act as nature's assistant.

There must be something wrong with that old axiom about ignorance being bliss—otherwise more people would be happy.

THE WHITE PRINCESS;

Or,

THE LURE OF THE NORTH.

By WILLIAM PERRY BROWN, author of "The Mislaid Man," "Marriage by Proxy," "A Chattanooga Girl," etc.

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CHAPTER XIII.

SYLVIA'S STRANGE VALENTINE.

"The floor of my room, the walls, and all my warm, comfortable surroundings, seemed to blend, like a mirage, into a white desolation of ice and snow. An illimitable polar wilderness, seamed with crevasses, corrugated by glaciered ridges and cliffs, the distance vast, shadowy mountains, not unlike our own Shasta in winter, only more spectral and terrible, more sinister and fierce. There was a wreck of something in the meager distance. Close at hand, under an ice-cliff, two men—only two, aunty, were lying asleep, under the snow. I seemed to see them with the snow over them, like a roof, yet I could also see everything else."

"Dreaming, Sylvia?" asked Miss Walwarth, sleepily. "Nothing but dreams, I worry about them not as they affect your health and spirits."

"You know, aunty, the snow is very warm and comfortable covering and even I, unused to exposure, could seem to feel a delicious warmth under the snow. I seemed in such cold, up there, was eternal. Oh! what a valentine!"

"Had you not best try to sleep, child?" cautioned the aunt.

"The face of one of these men," continued Sylvia, as if the other had not spoken, "was turned towards me. It was Commander Cleeve, tenant Stanton, or his corpse. Pale, motionless, he might have been sleeping. I have read recently, about Greely, Nansen and others, lost and wintering in those awful places, had cached themselves in the snow in their sleeping bags under the snow, there to wait for relief from the south."

"There was some one else, in your rather questionable valentine, was there not? Let us have it over with and go to sleep."

Miss Walwarth desired for Sylvia to dwell as little as might be on dangerous, hypothetical mind, worse than useless themes, which, after all, were simply a matter of temperament and imagination.

"The other one I could not make out, yet well I knew who it was. You see, there were only two of them, the Eskimo—if there was one, did not appear. Alone, with the rest, was with the ship, wherever that was. Perhaps he was dead in the distant wreck of what might be that miserable airship, the White Princess—rather, the white devil—to include all of them. I have had such an invention, into the power of—of that other man, whose right hand I do not, but whom I well know to be Commander Cleeve."

"Was not this airship named the White Princess, in compliment to you, Sylvia? Surely anything so fine should not merit your censure."

"That is mere hair-splitting, aunty, and you know it." Sylvia shuddered, then hugged her aunt. "Can this fearful valentine mean that they are dead, away from the rest; that something is wrecked, and that these are—are—are dead, aunty?"

"Surely, no. It is more than likely, irrespective of your valentine, that they are in view of these sensational wireless dispatches, that they are lying snug and warm, waiting for suitable weather to return or proceed on their designed route."

"Poor makes no difference, yet you may be right. But—aunty, it is the dead who in life, loved and were loved, that I'm thinking of now, living at George appeared to me."

"That, too, Sylvia, is matter of opinion. My opinion at present is that we had better drop it and go to sleep."

"Yes, it is the other one that I fear," said the girl, as if to herself. "The one whose face I could not make out."

"Ya-a-a-w-w hu-m-m-m!" yawned Miss Walwarth. "At any rate, you should once forget that while this weather holds, the Tacoma is bringing us every twenty-four hour nearer towards finding out who that other man is, and what he is doing to the ill important George."

"I know, full well I know, already?"

"Well, then, I want some sleep. Tell me tomorrow. Forget it—now?"

"Forget it!" cried the girl. "That gloomy, sardonic, Mephistophelian man! He is leading, or will lead, George to his death. I say I—I——"

An undeniable feminine snore was the only response.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN ILLIMANNI SHAKES THE WORLD.

When the Tacoma reached Sitka, several days were consumed in coaling and otherwise making ready for the tedious trip round the Alaskan Coast and through the Aleutian archipelago, towards Nome and the farther north. Sylvia chafed at the delay, yet felt strangely at home in the old town, where her ancestors had once held away more than a hundred years previous.

Walking down the picturesque main street of the whilom seat of Muscovite power in North America, past the quaint Greek church, Sylvia was about to enter the last, as had Miss Walwarth a moment or two before, when one of the half-breed native women, profusely bedecked with loud and tawdry, cheap jewelery, solicited her to enter one of the massive log houses, near-by, before which was an elaborate totem pole, carved and covered with cabalistic signs and emblems more or less malign and hideous.

"Pretty lady, come in. Me tell you fortune—Russian way—one-half doll—one-quick rubl. Have good luck. Come pretty lady."

She had possessed herself of Sylvia's hand, as if about to draw her inside, and so strong was her suasion, as opposed to the girl's listless indifference that she might have succeeded when some one called out:

"Sylvia! Sylvia Barnov! Wait for me." It was Miss Sophia, emerging from a side entrance of the church close by.

"There," said the girl, "Let my hand go. You are too persistent."

"Dreaming, Sylvia?" the woman, forcibly held open Sylvia's hand, scrutinized the lines in the palm, eyes glinting, brows deepening from the crown. Then, drawing the girl to her, she almost rudely thrust Sylvia from her and turned Sylvia's hair from her forehead, stared suddenly, fiercely, then gave an hysterical scream that might reveal the soul within, then exclaimed:

"Barnov!? You no Barnov!! This Island named for Baranof. All Alaska once Baranof's. Baranof Castle, Baranof Fort, all Russ, not for Baranof glory, but for love—love-a-joy! You found your mother, a half Tartar, half Russ—no Sitkah, no Aleut; go north for love. Yankee love at first. Ho, ho, ho, ha, ha, ha! Yankee love. You know what I see in your hand?"

Sylvia, by a great effort, extricated herself from this singular interruption, and the woman, more aunty like, hardly knowing what to make of it all. The woman—typical Aleut, Muscovite—whatever she was, continued to laugh and scream like a maniac. Yankee love no good for you. I read your fortune. Ship sail from north, two moons. Illimanni shake the world!—no one come back—you hand say so. You see! You see! You all see!"

Thus screaming and shaking her clenched hands in the air excitedly, while the most strange barbarian bedlamite, literally drove the ladies into the sanctuary, where the priest was shaking with unexplainable terror.

A full bearded "papas" or priest, passing, seized the creature by the shoulders, and thrust her into her cabin as one would an unruly animal, closing the door with a sign of the cross on his own breast he entered the church by a side door, without so much as a glance at the two ladies standing like startled sheep, as if not knowing where to go next.

"I have heard of her," said Miss Walwarth. "She is renowned, as the Scots say. Her father was an old Siwash chief, her mother—the real original seeress, was a Russ who, some of the gentlemen say, had good blood in her veins. What did she say to you, Sylvia?"

Sylvia's reply seemed to put the aunt to thinking. Her charming girl, tenderly reared, cured of all desire to see more of the picturesque old capital, was now only anxious to be off the land, once more the Tacoma, sailed the following day, and only when they were under way, did she really begin to enjoy the fine scenery that environs Sitka and its many beautiful surroundings.

The weather, very mild for that latitude, was clear and a brisk, easterly breeze blowing, the Tacoma, with sails and steam, far and near, the wooded hills and more distant mountains majestically into view for scores of miles. The girl exclaimed there, shone in the sun like vast rolling shields of white fire. Even the cut off ranges on the main land leaped into horrid, fiery, blinding relief, barring Sylvia from that still more awful north, where all that her heart craved for and needed, was one of these policemen who had good blood in her veins. What did she say to you, Sylvia?"

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A tall woman seated in the stern sprang to her feet with the motion of the steamer, rocked the long war boat, and shook both arms menacingly.

Sylvia, on the bridge by favor of the captain, turned pale at the sight.

"Two moons!" she shrieked the female wildly. "Illimanni shake the world! Me—true Baranof! All dead—all lost, lost, lost——"

The sounds became undistinguishable, but Sylvia had heard more than enough. It was the half-breed sorceress, who the day before, had examined her palm, and now reiterated her warning.

"Illimanni shake the world! All lost, lost, lost!"

For many waking and sleeping hours that sinister, foreboding refrain danced torturingly through her brain.

"What is the meaning of Illimanni, Captain?" some curious passenger aked.

"Spirit of Fire, in certain native idioms, I think. Somewhere in the interior, way to the north, it names a mountain range supposably of volcanic origin. These Aleuts worship it, being in a region where fire is a most priceless boon. That was old Wadesha, a crazy sorceress who ought to be ducked, and would have been buried alive a few years back, by some of the wild Chilcats or tribesmen she so often raves against."

The dinner gong sounded, but Sylvia had little appetite for the meal. Still in her ears seemed to ring the shrill discordant screech: "Two moons, two moons! All lost, all lost!"

It was then near the end of February 1906. Two moons would bring the calendar well into April.

CHAPTER XV.

"THREE MEN REACH LAND."

There were various delays and the passage, by the usual route was followed by the Tacoma along the coast, and through the long chain of islands to Unalaska, thence via the Pribilofs and the mouth of the Yukon to the Nome district, early consumed one of Nadeesha's two moons. Then there was a transfer of the two women to the old U. S. revenue cutter Corwin.

In this, good fortune seemed to smile on Sylvia's efforts quite unexpectedly. The Corwin had been directed by the Department at Washington to call at Big Diomede Island, thence through the straits to Point Hope, and Icy Cape, and other ports of staples, and also an enlarged apparatus for two new wireless stations, were on the judgment of the operators on board, news from the imprisoned whalers or ships and the information for the Eskimo to be best served.

Not certainly are in luck, aunty," said the girl when the lights of Nome, which for several months, when the long night prevailed, were practically faded as the cutter steamed away from the thick snow that frequently covered the water decks along that gloomy coast, except during the brief summer months.

The spring opened unusually mild, and Captain Dare of the Corwin was surprised to find so little ice in Behring Sea, reaching ice, as they drew slowly out of Norton Sound to the northward.

Two other ladies were on board. The captain's wife and a robust-looking maiden of Nome rich and not uncomely, whose fad was exploration and mountain climbing. She was a Miss Sophia Bernian, and had been entertained at Walwarth House. So, during the climatic handships to delicately reared women, they were soon all like a family party together.

At Nome and Big Diomede no further news had come from the far north. No word of the return of the Baranof man who had announced his purpose to reach the pole by flying, if it could be done.

"I have my theory as to air and ocean currents," said Cleeve to Dare, who knew him well before he was married to Miss Walwarth and others have theirs. If the ship fails us we have the airship."

It was Dare's opinion, privately expressed, that Miss Sophia, the captain's wife and Miss Walwarth concluded to wait on the return of the Corwin on an attempt to reach Point Barrow; for one of the main objects of the expedition was to establish one of the new wireless stations as should thoroughly test the practicabilities of the new systems used in those high latitudes.

Miss Klein and Sylvia, accompanied by one native Tshlikat woman, as maid, resolved to keep on. They might be gone a week, a month, perhaps longer, if no pack intervened and delayed.

"If you do, I leave me, yet I am too old to challenge my rheumtaxs further by undue exposure. Promise me that you will not be foolhardy, and remember the result of our wild goose chase into these regions will be you, Miss Sylvia, needlessly jeopardize your safety and your happiness while away. Miss Klein is risky and—"

The two women mingled their tears and embraces, but Sylvia, called the "risky" Miss Klein herself, who approached with the announcement that:

Captain Dare and Corwin, in the offing, is receiving dispatches—wireless dispatches—from somewhere. And the captain sends word that we must go on board at once. He also sends a boat."

So the friends were parted and when Sylvia and her new traveling companion reached the ship, and steamed out and out beyond the shore lee, a recent shift of wind and tide showed the reason for this sudden departure.

This was the drift westward during the night of the ice floes in the steamer and widening lane northeastward along the coast.

But somewhere out in that polar sea, a message had drifted through the electric ether just as wireless dispatches usually be, cast into a pool of water, reached further and further, always—until the wireless receiver at the mast-head of the Corwin caught the vibrations and decked them out into intelligible meanings to the ship's operator below.

And this was what the message read, as finally announced on the thread-like tapeline by range dots and dashes, to the fascinating passengers and crew: "Andree again heard from. Three men reach land. No word of White Princess. Forward this."

Some name followed, probably that of the cowgirl.

"In latitude or longitude given?" asked Miss Klein of the Captain, who had read what the operator translated.

"It is from a new station nearest Cape Barrow," remarked Dare. "I suppose the missing White Princess must be that airship."

"Look to the lady!" interrupted some one, who spoke on impulse.

Sylvia Haraboy, was swaying strangely, her face a deadly white; then with a tremulous, gasp, she sank to the deck.

She had fainted.

CHAPTER XVI.

"BOTH OF US MAY RETURN; ONE OF US MUST."

"What is wrong with the steering gear?" I said, when the Captain had ceased to work—look out!"

The dip of the huge, storm-driven airship again bumped its lowest working extremities against a projecting ice cliff. Pushed by driving winds, its horizontal, strongly braced wings, with aluminum propellers, fore and aft, the White Princess had already gone nearer the Pole, even than Nansen, or the later Duke of Abruzzi. And now, the indispensable rudder blade had given way in the impact.

"Our safety anchors! Don't expose yourselves in this biting air. Down, behind the big guard!"

Barely ten seconds had been taken in assisting the crew of engineers to follow these instructions, yet the blast, fresh from the North Pole itself, less than two hundred miles away, seemed like unstuffed faces like its extreme opposite—fire.

Crashing, banging, dragging out its life along a terrific succession of ice crags, hummocks, the exhausting mountain height of the continent or ocean that never melts, except as its edges break away and drift into other currents—the ruined airship at last yielded to its grapnels, and sank, a battered and shapeless wreck, on white men and an Eskimo, bruised, half-frozen, yet seemingly unharmed, crawled into their new dens.

Protected by certain weatherly ice cliffs, they gazed with a relief through sky, more brilliant than may be seen anywhere else than at or near the Pole. In the nearest horizon a dull red glow marked the upper rim of the arctic sun. Towards noontide, the white orb left their sleeping bags; but that of the Eskimo remained undisturbed until the next morning, looking at almost bear-like in the heavy fure of an Arctic winter canvas, cut, gruffly enough:

"The creature is dead, Stanton."

"The eldest, a slighter form, after a more sympathetic look and test, recoiled, as if the shock presaged some disaster to himself.

"That frightful ride in mid-air seems to have simply seared Chekno to death," commented he. "Land, ice and ocean he doubtless minded, but to go through what we did during this awful air ride, was too much."

"That and a catastrophic skull. He was thrown into that crevasse when we landed, but seems to have felt no suffering after them."

"Probably he did not know he was hurt and died in his sleep. Poor Chekno. He would rather have remained with the ship."

"Still it is a good stroke for you and me, considering where we are."

"How so? Why need his strength, his arctic experience——"

"There is one less to feed. We are at least five hundred miles from the nearest known habitable land. We will be supposed to be dead, since the airship alone was left at the ship, fast in the ice, seventy-six degrees northward. Wrangel Land. Lord, we'll have to eat each other—yet."

And the strong man looking strangely fierce and terrible, as the harvest moon's his more frail built companion, and smiled. It is truly Stanton's way.

For the first time during their long polar wanderings, each had been able to see, not at least, alone together in an isolation greater than can be imagined by those amassed in the heroes of a crowd behind business so near the Pole, Stanton felt something of the dread of his leader, that Sylvia had, so long, intuitively experienced in his own behalf.

He shook it off, and passently joined Cleeve in gathering from the wrecked airship such resources as had been prepared for any possible disaster similar to the present.

There were concentrated foods, a peculiarly arranged spirit lamp for making tea, and heating things. There were suitable fire arms and ammunition, also a light, collapsable aluminum auto boat and oar combined which, being within, and a part of the airship, had escaped destruction.

"No dogs to feed; with a wind or motor sled that might be used as a boat in crossing ice lanes; provisions; some alcohol for cooking—well, George, we may avoid drawing lots, to see which of us will eat the other, for some time still."

Something indefinably repulsive and ferocious, lingered in Cleeve's manner, which, all at once, turned Stanton sick with a vague apprehension. This was not so much for himself, as for the girl he loved who was then far away, as he supposed, in the Oakland suburbs of San Francisco Bay.

Had they known that the cyclone was then plowing northward towards the farthest attainable point, where science was thought be gathered, also that imperfect intelligence from the imprisoned ship was already fitted southward, Cleeve might have been goaded to swifter vengeance. Yet Stanton, as he would have been inspired by sweeter hopes, to live out the long struggle for existence, and to reach the nearest human aid, outside their own waning efforts.

Even when the wind lulled, as the low sun forged westward, the weary journey southward began, and was continued for many days at length obtained.

"Mr. Stanton found Herr Andree," said Cleeve, "but we are certainly nearer to the Pole than any other explorer has been before. Now for civilization, and some sure way to make what we have done known to mankind."

"Yes," returned Stanton, "let us go. For the present, we must make days from 0° to 45° below zero, these two, uncertain of each other and their dogless boat sled or motor propelled canoe.

One week, two weeks passed. As their strength waned, and their hopes, in like manner, gave way, yet heroically strove to keep up, the iron bound, ice bottle in which Stanton had begun to warm towards his frailer companion.

For many, for days, they would have to cache themselves under snow and ice blocks, during the storms which, in the early exposure. Only Cleeve's indomitable strength and perseverance enabled them to endure.

He had made two such trips before, returning food or fuel to the middle of an expedition to rescue the ill fated Jeannette, which had been crushed in the ice. Greely survivors two years later. He also had rescued Stanton, when, delirious, and in self-willed a man, had developed certain theories of his own, largely regardless of the counsel of his leader. Nerve were shown failed before.

They endured south, the motor power of their boat sled gave out. They depended then on nuts or their own strength to paddle their frail craft by oar and then, as they approached the eightieth degree, on sails improvised from their coats and tents, and once a walrus, but without success.

They were glad to catch the edible animal life to be encountered to any extent, when their provisions gave out entirely. Another day, and Cleeve, in the exhaustion of their sleeping bag when a slightly augmented wind, and the sudden, wild, surging approach to sunrise, which mid-spring knows so far north of the Arctic circle.

"Dead, dead the Lieutenant, feebly. "I'm finally played out, I guess. Say to Sylvia, if you get back, that I died her best."

"Die up!" ordered Cleeve, savagely. "Don't tempt me by giving up."

For days they had hardly spoken to one another, each grimly intent on effort, climbing, lifting, enduring, as best he knew how. For three days they had had no fuel rations. Only the day before, Stanton had sprawled exhausted, when trying to shoot a walrus, which mid-spring, had bundled him into it, and doubly exerted himself in passenger-ship.

He took as he eyed Stanton spoke to the latter of unappeasable hunger; yet probably that could be satisfied. The day was the day to do, the task of both. The boat-car or sled is still carried, although it has long since been sufficiently advanced to cause the pack ice to break up more readily, leaving lanes of water through those corrugated wastes of ice and snow; progress by that would be much easier than by pushing with sails built on wheels.

As Stanton and Cleeve, like his Captain, drew nearer him, lag and all, as part of a new starting him, he began another ceaseless, silent, stern effort to fight fate and—who knows—perhaps his own merciless cravings for food. Fortunately, where ice is every where, fresh water could be had by melting fresh fallen snow.

No word was further spoken for hours. George lay inert and helpless, a mere shadow of his former self, yet with a dumb appeal in his large eyes, that Cleeve's fierce gaze would not long encounter.

At noon they managed to cast a reckoning, and wondered dully why so murky a sky to the south, seemed to veil the usually brilliant wilderness of stars, as the smoke can rimmed the western horizon.

Strange to say, the mercury had risen unaccountably, and Cleeve shot a gray marmigan, the first land bird they had seen.

"Surely a favorable omen," he growled. "There must be real land somewhere about, probably an island."

But the keen little arctic creature merely made them hungrier, and something—again —made Stanton shudder as his eyes met those of his stronger, older—shall we say, hungrier?—companion. It suggested—manseeting.

Yet, probably Cleeve would have cut off his own hand—first.

Had he not, all that hard, bitter day, assumed and borne the task of both? And until the raw bird was cooked and devoured, did Stanton note that he, himself had eaten by far the larger part?

"Why did you give me so much?" he asked, weakly.

"Shut up! Probably to fatten you! Where is the reckoning? What date are we—can found the poor light—I say: what is the date?"

Each of them pondered thickly: both knew yet, somehow, forgot.

Suddenly Cleeve shouted, as much to himself as to Stanton.

"I know!" Stanton giggled hysterically, for no known reason, whatever. This irritated Cleeve. "Shut up, I say!" added the latter, "it's the eleventh, no—seventeenth of April. Any fool would know that."

He glared at the weaker one ferociously. Stanton, still giggled inanely, wagged his head, then involuntarily wept.

"S-s-s'-ter—s-s-s'-ter—think——" And that was as far as he went, in developing his idea.

Presently he slept in his bag, on the auto-boat sled with a mighty tea still steaming by their feet. Helpless, he lay, gaunt and attenuated; while the stronger one hung head him, a mere old leather, lank anything to dull the gnawing, craving pains within him.

Occasionally he eyed the sleeping Lieutenant, as if his great, strong fingers itched to be at his throat.

Whether because of hunger momentarily deadening the pain, or remembering that love this helpless creature had stolen—who shall tell?

Then a deep sadness seemed to turn the current of his long endurance, and while the fierce look immediately widened, as if some nethermost and abnormal force at work behind his eyeballs, the latter gaze curiously in that direction. What did these unusual phenomena mean?

Was there in them hope or despair? Were they two still the playthings of fate—as was the pitiful farce to end in tragedy?

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

When the Corwin left Point Hope and rounded Cape Lisburne, some three hundred miles to the northward were traversed. So far the time that Captain Dare's most sanguine expectations had foreshadowed.

It is not necessary to these days of steam, but when ice intervenes, many days have been spent, and venturous ships have been finally imprisoned for weeks, going neither forward nor backward.

Yet, these days, the time when Sylvia Haraboy recovered from her brief swoon found them in comparatively open water, north of the cape that marks the most northerly point of the Bird's territorial sway.

More than this, the whaling fleet, long impatient Herschel Point Bay, had sent by the wireless, news that many more of the surviving Point Barrow whalers had arrived. Also so many water lanes open northward, that the Corwin's officers seeing, that an expedition in boats was starting in search of the missing airship, and by this means the weather inspired hopes of obtaining some clew to the missing commander, his officers and crew, and Dare. The whalers were leaving, of course, and it was hinted that the latter water lanes beyond the shore ice, out where the Corwin lay, promised well, Captain Dare might at once set his vessel's prow northeasterly course and follow or intercept the boats.

Moreover, any volcanic activity in the remote Illimanni Mountains, beyond Neveltz, Alaska, might cause unusual disturbance, perhaps an earthquake.

"Illimanni!" exclaimed Sylvia, tremulous with an anguish which the others failed to recognize, which the others failed to recognize, but her experience with Nadeshna, Dare. See? Nature points the way; for, while many miles of shore ice are between us and the open water at the cape, the floes are still opening towards the north."

And so it proved, presently. Dare, himself, was pleased that the unusually open water was so near the cape, now that the entire people were safe, for them to join with the boats, in trying, at least, to solve the fate of the airship, and those on board. At best three who had never been heard from.

Nightfall showed the Corwin in the northern horizon which has been previously remarked. The water lanes also widened, and April seventeenth—eighteenth when these were reached—was approaching.

The following day, two strongly manned boats, the largest commanded by Stanton and of the third officer James Butler, and carrying, also, dog teams and sleds, were carrying, also, dog teams and sleds, were open water lanes taken on board, for as far as it was deemed safe to carry the ship. Dare, himself, with Mate Klein and Sylvia with them; for after full exploration of the Illimanni region, the natural force could have kept Sylvia back. Miss Klein went because she loved adventure and to keep Miss Haraboy company.

"It is even more exciting than mountain climbing, Miss Haraboy," said Mrs. Pearly, and they wintered further north than we are now."

They carried a portable wireless apparatus, to keep in touch with the Corwin. Dare did not build much on their finding trace of the airship; but he did wish to be able to locate the party, in case they became lost, themselves, or imprisoned in the ice pack.

Judge of his surprise when three days later, the ship operator ran from his chest under the main mast waving a tape just taken off the receiver, that read:

"White Princess, heard——s-s-s-s-s——Cleeve——s-s-s-s——Stanton——s-s-s-s don't know—yet s-s-s-s—wait for us——"

And that was all that could be intelligibly deciphered.

"Now, it is real provoking! Of course we will wait. That is what we are here for. Try them again, Simpson."

He did, but nothing more was learned, not even the position by latitude and longitude. In those days, when the Corwin, were obstacles, as yet but partially overcome, the wireless was wireless enough.

Meanwhile, the searchers, doubly stimulated by Sylvia's energy and a promised reward in case they had rescued the party, toiliscome days in unceasing strivings towards the north, but Dare himself, was afraid to venture further, especially as the pack was moving again, and the water lanes were on his hands, and—conscience.

They were about to return from their last attempt, when, in fact, did start backward on sleds, leaving Sylvia to take a final look from the crow's nest, when the other broken ridges around. So long did she remain, that Miss Klein grew fearful of the others' return, and at least remain a few hours longer, or the girl might go distracted, without a moment's misery night's rest.

The sun was then low in the southwest, and each of the returning sleds—Mr. Butler, as a last concession, assented and the party waited.

"That fool woman!" thought Miss Klein, when Sylvia returned heart broken and weary to the main ship. By which time the two women occupied in a double sleeping bag of their own, "I never saw the sun set. I would allow myself to worry about in this way. Goodness! What is that?"

"Where?" asked the weary Sylvia, who had not yet retired.

A tall, gaunt, gorilla-like figure stalked into the camp, bearing another, stiffer form, also gorilla-like in a smaller scale, and seemingly lifeless.

The larger one wavered at sound of the voices, and sank down in the snow, from which it laid at Sylvia's feet, and stood staggered, looked dazedly around, and at the girl, supposed to be thousands of miles away, and then let its throat covering ere if gasping for breath.

"Sylvia—you——" It began, swaying like a drunken man, mouth working, before he the helpless one she had come so far to see.

"Good God! That is Captain Cleeve, or his ghost!" cried Stanton.

"Have you killed him at last?" said site, gathering Stanton's wan, prostrate figure in her arms, with both of hers, before she was speaking.

"Oh, my love! Are you alive? What is the matter——"

"Alive—yes," whispered Stanton, weakly. oh, so weakly! "Thank Cleeve—good old Cleeve!—I was right, after all. Good old Cleeve! He stared about him, and then, with a week—good old Cleeve! Look!"

While they were speaking, the gaunt weaker one, now—alas!—the weaker one no more, Cleeve fell heavily, nor did he rise again.

He was dead.

An hour later he died of sheer exhaustion and starvation, and long before he knew that the full extent, both of his Polar success, as well as his final sacrifice of himself for the sake of Stanton was fully known, and appreciated.

Stanton, by self-will, he managed to say, while they ministered to him. "I drew him into it, and he sacrificed himself to—to—carried my White Princess into the farthest north. What was there to do? Only for me to—to—get back with the White Princess!"

And so passed that strong soul away; none is his memory here shall ever Sylvia and her husband, than his fame was assured by the brave his airship where Dare drew himself might have quailed, considering time and season.

Yet, a more manly mettle are made those to whom that strange "Lure of the North" becomes one all-subduing passion, the desire to do and dare beyond other men, which is the difference between great and small among the children of Adam.

The end.

The Fisherman and Farmer.

It was an enthusiastic fisherman. He had caught a half dozen black bass about the size of sardines, and proudly placed the catch before a farmer for inspection. The granger turned the little fishes over with the handle of his knife, and, looking up into the face of the fisherman, remarked in painfully measured syllables:

"You—don't—look—as—if—you—been—about—as well—off—if—you—had—kept—your—bait—and—cooked—it."

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"Even if the coal president had more money?"

"Yes; you see, sugar is more refined than coal."

Even Break.

The Barber—Beg pardon, sir, but this is a bad quarter.

The Victim—Oh, well, don't you care. It isn't any worse than the haircut you gave me.

Exception.

Mrs. Naggs—Everything the Brokeleighs have is borrowed.

Mr. Naggs—Oh, I don't know! They seem to have troubles of their own.

'Twas Ever Thus.

Interviewer—And do you always wait for inspiration before beginning a poem?

Great Poet—Oh, no. Sometimes I need the money.

Mr. Porke Packe—What the papers are printing about my preserved meats is all rot. We give the people the best we can.

Mr. C. Moore—That's strange! They seem to have the idea that they get the worst you can.

Played In Luck.

Rowan—Did you have any trouble in learning to play the cornet?

Eliott—Not worth mentioning. All the neighbors were poor shots.

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A Rogue Exposed.

Winkel (at a reception)—That English lord is an impostor. He is not even an Englishman. He's an American.

Minkel—Eh? How did you find that out?

Winkel—I offered to call for him with my carriage tomorrow and take him a little drive around the suburbs—Maine, Texas, California, etc., and, instead of accepting the offer, he laughed.

Monculous Question.

Her—Would you say that Miss Muggsby has a pug nose or that her nose is retrousse?

Him—Well, that depends. How—er—much is her father worth?

Knew What He Wanted.

Young Gent—Um—er—do you ever take back goods and—return the money?"

Jeweler—No, sir! but if you have an engagement ring, I'll melt it up for you and pay for the gold.

Neither Suited.

Angry Husband—What I wanted was a wife who would be a helpmeet.

Angry Wife—Huh! What I wanted was a husband who would supply meat to help.

Hopelessly Lost.

Muggins—Yes; I was robbed by a highwayman, but the police got my money back.

Buggins—Where is it.

Muggins—Didn't I say the police got it?

At a Disadvantage.

Tom—I don't see anything remarkably brilliant about Miss Cotrox.

Jack—Just wait till you see her with all her diamonds on.

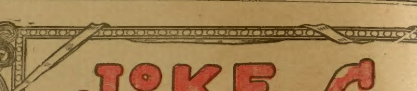
He Admitted It.

She—I shall never forget what a fool you looked the day we were married.

He—I was a fool—there's no doubt about that.

Stingy.

He loves to spend a pleasant hour
With pretty lady friends;
But all the girls are getting sour,
For that is all he spends.



PHYSICIAN SAYS

Children Thrive on Grape-Nuts and Cream.

A Mass. physician had found a cure for constipation in children—citing fifteen cases—by feeding them Grape-Nuts.

"Some time ago," he writes, "I became interested in your food, Grape-Nuts, as a cure for constipation in children. Having tried it in my own family, I have advised it in fifteen cases in which all suffered with constipation more or less severe. The result has been absolute relief in all.

"I write this that other children may be benefited."

How much better it is thus to bring about a healthy action in the bowels of growing children by natural means, than to feed them with improper food, requiring some kind of cathartic at intervals to overcome constipation.

Grape-Nuts gives energy to the entire nervous system including the nerves that cause the natural contraction and relaxation of the bowel muscles, that propel the food mass along.

It is predigested also, and the blood easily absorbs the food as it goes through the body, storing up vitality and force for the functions of all the organs.

Children especially, should get the right start as to habits of living. They should grow bright, strong, cheerful men and women. Grape-Nuts solves the question of the start; a wholesome appetite will do the rest.

Children's teeth are benefited by chewing Grape-Nuts, also. Your dentist will tell you that a certain amount of exercise in chewing firm food, is necessary to grow strong beautiful teeth.

Teeth need exercise just the same as muscles. If they are to grow strong and firm as nature intended. Grape-Nuts gives the exercise and also gives material from which good teeth are made.

"There's a reason." Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Just Between Friends.

Mrs. Growells—My husband treats me shamefully.

Miss Elderleigh—Well, in case he ever becomes a widower I'll promise you to do my best to reform him.

Now They Don't Speak.

Maude—Jack makes me tired.

Clara—It's your own fault, dear. You should stop running after him.

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and rruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in the condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

Curt.

He—Do you think it would be foolish of me to marry a girl who was my inferior intellectually?

She—More than foolish—Impossible.

She—Did you let father know that you owned a lot of house property?

He—I hinted at it.

She—What did he say?

He—He said: "Deeds speak louder than words!"

The Cook's Fault.

Hungry Guest—Whose fault is it that I am kept waiting so long for my order?

Waiter—The cook's suh. The cook don't like me this mo'ning.

He don't, eh?

No sah. You see, I didn't hab no quarter to gub him. Thanks, sah. I'll go win his affections, sah.

Took It for Granted.

Homely Lady—Oh, I guess you can fill the place. My husband is an easy man to suit.

New Cook (looking her)—Yes, num, I can readily believe it.

Homely Lady (to herself)—Strange she should take that for granted, but probably she knows a superior woman like myself wouldn't marry a crank.

Suspicious.

Eva—He dared to ask me for a kiss. Of course I refused. I think he has a check.

Edna—And he is so smooth.

Eva—Then he must have a smooth cheek

Edna—No, he has a rough cheek. That is—er —— Oh, I don't know anything about it.

Dead Sure Case.

Pat—Oi say, Molk, wus yez iver struck by lightnin'?

Mike—Nanny's the time, me b'y.

Pat—Yez don't mane it!

Mike—Shure, an' Oi do. Haven't Oi been married these tin years?

Every Lady Read This.

Years ago when I was a sufferer, an old nurse told me of a wonderful cure for Leucorrhea, Displacements, Painful Periods, Uterine and Ovarian troubles. It cured me in one month. It is a simple, harmless lotion that can be prepared by any one in the house. I will send it free to every suffering sister who will write to me. Address Mrs. A. Hudnut South Bend, Indiana.

Optimistical.

Mrs. Waggsby—My husband has developed a mania for playing the races.

Mrs. Naggsby—My goodness! What are you going to do about it?

Mrs. Waggsby—I'm going to join a 'don't-worry' club.

Unsatisfactory.

"Ah," sighed the love-sick youth, "if you would only return my love!"

"That's just what I intend to do, replied the, maid with the cold-storage heart. "I haven't any earthly use for it."

And still he wasn't satisfied.

If—

"Do you think that the motor car will displace the horse?" asked the conversational young woman.

"It will," answered the nervous young man as he gazed down the road, "if it ever hits him."

THE AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER.

Lady (who is posing and rather tired)—O, my dear Mr. Doolan, haven't you yet got it all right for taking me?

Mr. Doolan (amateur photographer)—My dear lady, it'll be fine! You're just in the very attitude! Come round now and see for yourself!

JOLLITY

His Marriage a Failure.

Desperate Husband—Do you mean to say you would object to a divorce from such a woman as I have described?

Good Priest—I would. In our church marriage can be dissolved by death only.

Very well. Please direct me to the nearest gunshop.

Cause for Anxiety.

Carwheel Manufacturer (passenger in fast express train, which is making a long stop)—What are you striking those wheels for?

Man with Hammer—To see if they are sound yet.

Carwheel Manufacturer (nervously)—Well, please don't hit 'em quite so hard."

Limit.

The stranger halted on the edge of the hobo camp.

"We are so hungry, mister," yawned the lanky hobo in the old toll hat.

"Then why don't you go out and beg at the nearest farmhouse?" asked the stranger.

"We are all so tired no one will volunteer so we are going to shake dice to see who must perform the painful duty."

"Well, what is the delay?"

"Why, we are waiting for an earthquake, boss, to come along and shake the dice-box."

TOO BAD.

The Young Widow—I lost my husband and my spaniel the same day.

He—How unfortunate!

"Yes; such a nice dog, too.

A Meek Husband.

A man, accompanied by his wife, visited a merchant tailor to order a suit of clothes. The couple differed as to the material and the manner of making, and the wife lost her temper.

"Oh, well," she said, turning away, "please yourself; I suppose you are the one who will wear the clothes."

"Well," observed the husband meekly, "I didn't suppose you'd want to wear the coat and vest."

He Did His Best.

Plainness of speech is never to be despised in connection with work of reclamation.

"Did you struggle against the consequences of temptation?" inquired a prison visitor.

"Yes'm," replied the object of her compassion.

"Ah, if you had fought just a little harder you wouldn't be here today."

"I done th' best I could, ma'am," said the prisoner modestly; "th' took six policemen to get me to the station."

Practical Exercises.

"Yes, Lucy captured Dick for a husband."

"Lucy? Why, I thought Thelma would win him with her graduation exercises."

"No, Lucy won him with her after-graduation exercises."

"After graduation exercises?"

"Yes; as soon as she had graduated she went home and helped her mother to iron and wash the dishes."

Why Lovers Laugh.

When Cupid's arrows miss the mark.
And fall to mark the miss,
The lovers' future seems so dark
That blighted is his bliss.
But, after meditation grim,
He shouts with unfeigned glee:
"It was an arrow escape for him
And a narrow escape for me!"

Sounded Familiar.

Jinks—Yes, the old farmer was telling about the fight between his two game roosters.

Binks—But why was old Colonel Bluecork so interested.

Jinks—Why, because the farmer said when the fight was over there was nothing left but two cockatoos.

How Sh. Floored Him.

May Pechis—Jack Goodley called upon me the other evening.

Mr. Chelius—Huh! How did you survive it? I suppose he talked about something idiotic all the time—"

May Pechis—Well, yes, he spoke about you a great deal.

HOW TO CURE CANCER

In from 15 to 30 days by my new home treatment. Write for free illustrated book. DR. D. M. BYE, 180 Bye Building, FINDLAY, O. HIO. I refer to any bank or business firm in Lebanon.

Men of Few Words.

Jollyfellow (after an absence)—Hello, Meak! Married yet?

Meak (sadly)—No; not married yet.

Jollyfellow (after another absence)—Hello, Meak! Married yet?

Meak (sadly)—Yes; married yet.

Not Skeptical.

"I suppose," said Miss Angular, "you would hardly believe me to be thirty-two years old."

"Oh, yes," rejoined Mr. Biffingham, "I would have believed it ten years ago."

The Man—I'd give anything if you would kiss me.

The Maid—But the scientists say that kisses breed disease.

The Man—Oh, that's all right. Go ahead and make me an invalid for life.

Her Wish.

"I wish there were ten days in the week," sighed Gladys.

"Why?" asked Grace.

"Jack would call oftener then."

Not What He Meant.

Would-be Coquette—A woman is as old as she looks.

Would-be Gallant—Oh, surely, you are no exception to the rule.

AGENTS WANTED

Nearly all the readers of THE LEDGER will find those advertisements of interest to them. There will be found among them excellent chances of making money by selling goods to friends, neighbors and others. Those seeking such an opportunity either as a regular or temporary occupation, should write the advertisers whose offers follow.

"Sells like blue blazes"

is what one of our enthusiastic agents says about the Transparent Handle Pocket Knives. Another writes "Everybody takes one." Free Outfit. Samples and Big Sellers. Transparent, but sells for only 25 cents and an amazing profit to our agents. No excuse for any man or woman being out of employment. Write for our free catalog and how many DOLLARS and DOLLAR and a half you can make. Positions open for road crew and branch office managers. Our offers beat all others. Write today for our free mammoth circular. **PEERLESS CHEMICAL CO., Chicago, Ill.**

AGENTS WANTED to sell the Celebrated Morris 25 Transparent Handle Pocket Knives. Write for terms. Rice Cutlery Co., P. O. Box A, Meriden, Ct.

AGENTS, CREDIT, Perfumes, Plushes, etc. Big profits. Express Paid. Terms Free. Diamond Agency, Co. Box 56, Gen'l P. O., New York City.

STARK best by Test—70 YEARS. We PAY CASH WANT MORE SALESMEN. Write for Weekly Stark Nurseries, Louisiana, Mo.; Dansville, N. Y.

EXTENSION Axle NUTS SIDE WABBLES. Make old buggies like new. Sample by mail 25c. Business Van Dorn Hardware Co., Box 238, Pontiac, Mich.

WE HAVE OPENING now in every State for one or two more salesmen to introduce Egg-Inspectoscope, necessary if hustler. Permanent position. Good pay. Promotion. Reverett Tobacco Works, Box F 24, Reverett, Va.

ILLUSTRATED SECRET HISTORY of the World's Greatest Nation. Three White Trespass. Most sensational book of the year. Send twenty-five cents for copy. Agents wanted. Tremendous profits. Frank Carpenter, 84 Adams St., Chicago.

CEREAL COOKER

A invention in utensils over and into which cereals and vegetables are cooked. Quick and lasting meal. Novelties for all. Free to agts. Dept. 15 Manufacturers Novelty Works, 25 Randolph St., Chicago.

FISH BITE INSTANTLY

All anglers, if you use INDIAN FIRE you will be successful; its irresistible. Ask for proofs. Pass by imitations you will interest others. Agents wanted. W. C. Andrews, Box 1 1720, Madison, Ind. Ter.

$3 a Day Sure. Post or your address and we will show you how and explain the business fully; remember we do not want you to work by the month or year; we pay for all your time, if you want to devote your whole time to the business, or spare moments only. Send us your address and we will explain our offer, which is entirely new. Address, ROYAL MANUFACTURING CO., Box 1703, Detroit, Mich.

AGENTS WANTED

We want Agents to sell our Make-To-Order Raincoat Parts. Sales from $10.00 up. Pants, $2.00 up. We will give liberal commission to the right men. If you are ambitious, write at once for sample outfit, particulars and territory.

Warrington Woolen & Worsted Mills, Dept. "H," Chicago, Ill.

MEN WANTED Reliable Men in every locality throughout United States and Canada to distribute samples, tack signs, advertise on fences, bridges and barns, and other conspicuous places; steady employment; commissions or salary $900 a year, or $80 a month and expenses $2.00 a day. Steady employment to good and reliable men. We pay and your work for you. No experience needed. Write for full particulars. NATIONAL MEDICINAL CO., London, Ontario, Canada

AGENTS WANTED Everywhere for Big Catalog and Sample Outfit Free

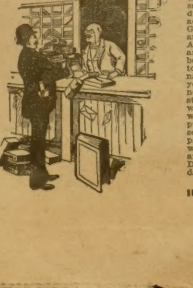
Agents given 30 days' credit; pay the wholesale price for what is delivered, and keep the profit. No money needed; everything furnished except the sweat; you can make $100 a week. Don't be a slave. Be your own boss. Many of our 900 agents cleared over $1000 last year. We sell portraits for 35 to 75c; frames 15 to 50c and a full line of steel engravings, stereoscopes and art supplies. Big Catalog and Free Sample Outfit now ready. ENLIGHTENED PORTRAIT CO., 899-419 West Adams Street, Chicago, Ill.

Make Big Money in a business of your own. We will start you. Women can easily build up a permanent, profitable trade at home. Fashion Goods. We are Importers and Wholesale and Coffee House in America selling to the consumer direct, through the mails. Capital unnecessary. WE START YOU. Write for booklet. HOME INDUSTRY EXPLAINED. FREE and COMPLETE OUTFIT FREE. Write today before someone else gets your territory. Address nearest office. Send no stamps—just a line—and send it NOW.

THE ROYAL TEA CO., 701 Cottage Grove Ave., CHICAGO

When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

BIG MAIL FREE



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AGENTS' DIRECTORY LIST, INDIANA. INDIANA COUNTY, PA

Dingg—Are your twins troublesome?
Dongg—Not a bit. Each one makes me so much trouble I forget all about the trouble the other one makes me!

His Money, Too.

He—That jolly Miss Smith is a girl after my own heart!
She—If you think that is all what she is after you are foolish!

On to Her.

Miss Blow—Tee, indeed! I've had eight proposals this season.
Miss Cunningham, well! What perseverance! What's the man's name?

Those Fool Questions.

Busty Buttons—Mister, kin yer assist me? I'm broke!
Meddergreen—Air ye broke t'work?

HONOR AMONG THIEVES;

OR

A STRANGE ROMANCE.

By ERNEST DE LANCEY PIERSON,

Author of "A Slave of Circumstances," "The Black Bell," etc.

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CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE COAL CELLAR.

"Any coal-o! Any coal-o! Yer's the fines' black diamon's, quarter a bag. Coal-o!"

These calls, delivered in a hoarse and raucous voice, were uttered by a very disreputable man in a ragged canvas suit, and so smudged with the dust of the wares he was trying to sell that he hardly resembled a human being.

His thickness of utterance and uncertain gait accounted for his hawking his wares about Goodwood Square at an hour close on to midnight. Not but what there were a number of people coming and going, generally speaking, along and across to the shadows, and they paid no more attention to the little man with the half empty bag on his back than they did to a broken iron figure in the middle of the square.

Though the shadowy figures that came and went paid no heed to the coal hawker, any person watching them closely enough might have noticed that he betrayed some curiosity regarding these same pedestrians slinking along the walls.

Now and then in the pauses of calling his goods he would look over the lofty building with the sagging roof that displayed on its shabby front the name, "St. Bigbi Hotel."

Then, after wandering about the square for some time and at very irregularly spaced intervals, he would shuffle his way towards this building, and, passing to the side of the hotel, stepped under the shadow, with an utterance to his doleful cry with all the strength of a lusty pair of lungs.

While no one hastened to accept his offer to provide fuel, a lighted window high up in the building suddenly became dark. The small coal seller, whose eyes had been fixed on this window, paused for a few further strides around on his beat, and turning the corner of the building, struck into a side street that led to the river.

He stopped in the middle of the block, hiding behind a huge demijohn that stood on the sidewalk as a sign for a barrelhouse, and waited.

Presently a tall, burching fellow came sauntering down the street, whistling softly to himself and casting an eye right and left, as if in quest of something or some one.

"Tall on hand so late, my friend, sir," said the coal seller, when the big fellow had came abreast of him. The other nodded and strode forward. They came together in a narrow street two blocks ahead.

"So it's you, eh?" asked Bucky, eyeing the sooty personage before him. "Faith, I'm not so sure but what you're overdoing the business," and he shook his big head doubtfully. "To see how mightily you are! High-class men fer high-class work, is his motter. He ain't much use fer the poor devils that scramble fer scraps. He likes men that he can trust to do the work up neat."

"You leave me to manage him," said the detective, confidently. "I'm used to dealings with these sorts of people before."

"But never yet with the likes of this Johnny," replied the man of the mantle. "Now I'm no coward meself, but I don't like' the idea of facin' him meself alone."

"Come, no weakening!" replied Perdrick, sternly. "You are going to call those two men, and the best thing you can do to show your desire to be honest is to help me down the road of finding him."

"Ye-es. But he can strike far and hard when he wants to," grunted Bucky, who had evidently no stomach for the business before him.

"Nonsense, he will be only too glad to welcome back a man of your strength to the ranks. Who else but you could and would carry out such a neat job as you did last night?"

"I did do that up slick, didn't I?" assented the big fellow, and then heaved a sigh, as if he rather regretted that the job could not soon be employing his remarkable talents in that line again.

"Now, then, here we are," as they passed before a tall tenement house. The door was open and a faint light showed a long, bare and greasy hall.

Whispering to Perdrick to follow him, Bucky led the way through the house. They crossed an open space littered with cinders and refuse and halted before a very aged brick building that had been braced up by some huge timbers to keep it from falling.

The front door was closed by a board nailed across it, as the detective was enabled to see by the faint moonlight that now shone over the scene, and which brought out the wretched details of the place distinctly.

There was something at once forbidding and pathetic about the look of a house. At one time it might have been the prize of some humble proprietor, and the laughter of children have echoed through its deserted halls; now fallen in respectability, it had become the meeting-place of a band of criminals.

"This is the place," said the big fellow, casting a timid look at the tottering building. "Faith, could they have chosen a better? But the inside ain't like this at all at all. Lave it to him to do business in comfort."

Perdrick now wondered how such a disreputable shell could be made comfortable within, for the windows were open to the air of heaven, except those on the ground floor. There seemed to be no attempt at secrecy about the building or to keep people out.

While Perdrick was speculating in this way, his companion drew him suddenly into the shadows of the porch, still hidden by some bare and straggling vines that swayed back and forth in the midnight breeze.

"I will be back in a little bit he gets by," whispered Bucky, as a man appeared suddenly before the house in the moonlight. He was gone in a moment and without a sound, and then a slight noise from within the house suggested that he must have entered the building.

"Do you know who that was?" he asked his companion in a whisper.

"Now I do not think that," with a shiver, "but the Lord knows he can change his face an' his figure like a chameleon, so he can," showing unmistakable signs of fear.

"Why, I really believe you are frightened," said the detective, "you who have the strength and skill! Why, you ought'n't to be afraid of anything, even spirits!"

"Do you know who that was?" he asked his companion in a whisper.

"Now I do not think that," with a shiver, "but the Lord knows he can change his face an' his figure like a chameleon, so he can," showing unmistakable signs of fear.

"Why, I really believe you are frightened," said the detective, "you who have the strength and skill! Why, you ought'n't to be afraid of anything, even spirits!"

"Are

like this man's. The man in the mask laughed as if he understood what the detective was thinking about.

"You'll rake your brain in vain to put a label on me," he said. Like one who enjoyed the situation. "I am not on the list, and I don't mean to give you a chance to put me there. You would have done much better to have remained idle than have taken up your work again. Then you would not have interfered with our plans, and that would never do. You stand in the way of our business, and you know how the trusts retaliate when any one tries to interfere. They simply wipe 'em out."

Pendrick did not answer. Yes, this man had, certainly, good reasons for wishing him out of the way. They must know enough about him to believe that once on their track he would follow the trail to the end. They would be only protecting themselves against annihilation in removing him.

"What's this man doing here with the old fellow? The latter, who could hardly be considered dangerous, was seated off in a corner puffing a dirty short pipe and apparently wrapped up in his own thoughts.

Pendrick heard the man he first entered this room that he heard the sound of voices beyond the partition, as if there was another room there.

Was the faithless Bucky enjoying himself there with the reward of his betrayal? It was than he heard the loud, hoarse voice of the man in the mask remonstrating out the lines of an old song:

"Have you seen me Uncle Mickey?

He wears a shiny hat.

A coat o' frieze would dazzle yer eyes,

A blooming fine coat that.

He's six fate two in his stockin' fate,

A voice like the sound of a drum—"

"Silence, you fool," cried the man with the mask as he dashed away from the table and stood in the far end of the room where he pushed back a panel and passed through, closing it hastily behind him. He jumped to his feet his eyes flashing. This unexpected interruption might turn to profit but he must act quickly. He had his hand on the other pistol hid in his coat.

The fool might have been able to harmless, and whom Pendrick had hardly taken into consideration, was now dropped his pattern and darting forward clasped Pendrick about the knees with his long arms, that seemed to reach into the back of his coat. The thing had been accomplished so swiftly that Pendrick had no chance to get out of his grasp as he rocked back and forth in the powerful clasp of the old man as if he had been in a steady rocking chair.

This pigmy would have him down in a minute, and the detective would be at the mercy of a good grip on him to break away.

Frowid yer own, Pendrick," roared a voice as he recognized as belonging to Bucky. "I'll be wid ye in a moment. Take that, now," and the sound of a blow going on there in the room beyond ceased suddenly. The detective heard the sound of some heavy body falling.

"I think I have you now, Pendrick," said the man with the mask, who had disappeared in the opening with a good grip on him to break away.

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"I think I have you now, Pendrick," said the man with the mask, who had disappeared in the opening with a good grip on him to break away.

"I'm afraid you've got the best of it, this time," said the detective, who had recovered his self-possession and was ready for any emergency.

"Bucky, you would have proved a traitor with a little more time, but I'm glad to have drunk from the old fellow's grip.

"Who, why you sound like Bucky," gasped Bucky, delighted to find the detective had suffered no hurts.

"Then you had come up it might have gone hard with me.

"There is a chance of this hole, for sure I didn't damage The Mouser much, though it was a good one.

"But where is the old fellow?" asked Pendrick, suddenly looking around him perplexed.

"Well, I'm domned!" growled Bucky, starting and scratching his head. "I never thought he was put to sleep for an hour, any way."

The panel in the back of the room, which had stood open, was suddenly closed and they heard the click of the lock.

"Ah, what a fool I was when d'ain' with such devils to be so easy handed. Sure, I'm too soft-hearted, and I'll lose me head because of it yet.

"Well, are we free so far."

"Yes, so far, an' mebbe no farther. D'ye think I'm such a fool as to think they can cook up some fresh divirtry? Don't dissell till yer out o' the woods, me bucko. Them's the rules I live with, I feel so."

"Let us try the door," pointing to the one about which opened on the fireplace. "You have been here before, you should know how to manage it."

"Mebbe I do, mebbe I don't; but it's the on'y way."

Bucky rap up the ladder, wrenched the bolts loose and then set his great shoulders to the task of raising the door. He strained until his face was purple and his breath became in heaving gasps. The iron door creaked, but never budged under the mighty strain it was as immovable as if cemented in the stone.

"Ah, the rogues has changed it since I was here last," grunted the big fellow, ceasing his work for a moment to take his breath, the sweat dripping from his face. "Listen to that, raising a hairy head for attention and cocking up his ear. "D'ye hear steps walkin' about up there?

"Yes, I think I do."

"It's them, I'd wager me hat. Here we waste time on this door, we must try another way out. Come out through the back, mebbe we can do as well."

So saying, he run down the short flight of steps, picked up the heavy table by which Pendrick and the strange man had been sitting during that unpleasant interview, and hurled it against the partition. Then he uttered a cry of triumph as a great gap appeared large enough for them to pass through abreast.

"Hold on a moment! They may be waiting for us beyond here! Be cautious," whispered the detective, as the impulsive fellow was about to fling himself through the opening.

"Bother!" exclaimed Bucky, pushing him aside and stepping forward. "I'm just dyin' so I am, to have another crack at them fellers," and in a moment he was through the hole and out of sight.

Pendrick, who had secured the lantern from the floor, where it had fallen when the old man attacked him, peered through the opening, waving the light before him, for it was dark within.

Where was Bucky? He could not see him and was about to call out when he heard a quick, sticky, sweet odor that seemed to go to his brain and cause his senses to swim, and he seemed to pour out in gusts from that inner room.

What was coming over him? Why, was he fainting?

He lantered over the ragged edge of the breach, lantern in hand, feeling more dizzy and weaker, his eyes growing dim and confusing. Then he stumbled over some heavy object on the floor and, looking down, saw the body of Bucky, who lay there with outstretched arms and his eyes closed.

"What! is he dead?" gasped Pendrick, leaning over tenderingly for a better view. Then the lantern dropped from his grasp and went out. He felt a whirl in his brain and fell forward.

CHAPTER XV.

MISS GALBRAITH SEES A LITTLE SHADOWING.

It had been a trying day for Florence Galbraith. Since early morning she had been pestered by reporters, who had come from the world without, and by veiled and anonymous notes from Mrs. Galbraith within.

When, about four o'clock in the afternoon, she began to realize that she was a prisoner, scarcely been silent all day—and she saw from the window a sharp-faced fellow on the steps, whom she took to be a detective or a newspaper man, she resolved to break away from her tormentors if possible.

By the time the gentleman at the door had gained admittance, Florence had made up her mind to leave the house, saying that she could not stand the strain no longer, but would spend the rest of the day in the cozy home of her old nurse, who lived in the lower part of the city.

Having placed the note in his room where he could not fail to see it, the young lady took Fyvie's cloak and hat from the hooks by the back way, resolved not to return until she was tolerably sure that she could escape further inquisition, such as she had been compelled to undergo during the past month in the Arcadian Flats.

The thought of flight was so sudden that it left her trembling and quite ready to faint when she found herself in the street, but she knew that she would find at Mrs. Goggins' the sympathy and support she needed.

The old Irish woman, who occupied a place in her affections that was peculiarly her own, and who still kept a mechanics' boarding house in Grove street, and was not a little surprised when the young lady descended on her from a cab and announced that she intended to spend the night. It was in her house and that she was to keep her presence a strict secret even from her friends. Mrs. Goggins was at first in favor of having her darling under her roof for a week or two, but was quite ready to consent to any plans the young lady should make, and when she had explained to her that Florence should pass as her niece while she was there so as not to excite suspicion.

"But ye look altogether too stylish in that get-up for a simple Irish girl," said the good woman, as she surveyed her guest carefully from head to foot. "Ye'll be after bootines on her feet. "Yer to be Mary Brady, now, the daughter of Dinny Brady, as I was in the Muley Hassan in the Chinee say, and ye'll have to dress accordin'."

Though Mrs. Goggins was portly and rough-looking, she was quick-witted enough in the world to have romantic notions, she rather enjoyed the situation.

She searched among old dresses from a trunk in the garret that she had accumulated during her long residence, and even from rerreant patrons, and succeeded in making up from the cloth and finery that she had on hand the position Florence was to occupy in the house.

"Ye'll be after wearin' the first rental that happen that she'll have to pay," she said with a chuckle. "It's a good one and the unfortunate position he was in enabled me to get it for a song.

Meanwhile, to keep her mind occupied, she helped Mrs. Goggins in the kitchen with the work, and that good lady proved a cheery companion and succeeded in amusing her from getting depressed.

It was settled that the niece should keep out of sight as much as possible, for some of the boarders were rough diamonds and would be apt to make things disagreeable. What, with the weary day and the the work she had volunteered to do to keep her mind occupied, the young girl was glad enough to get a few hours' sleep after supper, and was soon in dreamland, wandering under the her meeting with Detective Pendrick.

Florence dreamed many incoherent things from the outfit Mrs. Goggins had provided, and it was not likely that any of her fashionable friends would have recognized the female shuffling along the streets in heavy shoes and a shawl that covered well with blue roses and a seedy black gown, as Edith Galbraith's niece, even if she had not worn the thick veil that hid her features.

The hour had arrived, but not the man, as she soon discovered when she found herself in the parlor where she had not pointed to meet the detective the previous night.

There was a policeman walking up and down, who eyed her in a way that caused a shiver, but of Pendrick there was no sign. She had counted on hearing some good news that would cheer her up. She fully expected that he would be able to tell her that he had got on the trail of the criminal, and that very soon Renwood might come out of hiding and face the music. But this hope was not to be realized, and after she had roamed here and there about the neighborhood until she saw that the policeman was beginning to pay her further attention, she turned away with a heavy heart. There was nothing now to do but wait and see him at his office in the morning.

She was just leaving the neighborhood of the Park when a man stepped out from the shadow of a tree, a very shabby looking individual with a beard that almost concealed his features.

"Miss Galbraith," he asked in a low voice.

Could it be Pendrick in disguise—she wondered! But now one glance at the—body figure—he was—convinced enough that it could not be the detective, unless he had found some mysterious way of adding a few eight inches to his height. Which, then, one of three abominable men it was, he had been tormenting her all day?

"I do. I know you. Please let me pass," she said, moving on.

"But you must know me," said the man, with a faint chuckle. "I'm the one who brought you news from—you know who, I—mean."

Oh, that was a different thing; she was eager now to hear what the fellow had to say, for was he not the only medium from whom she could learn something of the unfortunate artist?

"Well, my letter; where is it? Give it to me," she demanded!

"I haven't got it—for you tonight," he began, "but it is perfectly well and safe. We decided that it was best not to have any more communication between you and you. You see you are watched, and it might bring the police—I mean

...By...
WILL LISENBEE.

THE WHITE CANOE;

...Or...
THE SPECTRE OF THE LAKE.

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CHAPTER VIII.
UNDER THE CLIFFS.

Lee held his rifle ready for instant action, while the beating on the door increased.

It was evident now that the Indians intended to make a forcible entrance into the cabin unless something was done to stop them, and Lee was too greatly frightened to think coherently. But he had made up his mind to fire on them the moment they tried to cross the threshold. Yet he realized that he ought to do something to prevent their breaking in the door. Once they should beat the door down, they could swarm in upon him despite all he could do and could run out and kill in resistance.

At this juncture the sound of a welcome voice broke on the ears of the besieged youth. Never in all his life did the sound of a human voice bring such joy to him.

It was the voice of Hy Reeder, the old trapper, and rang out sharply above the din the savages were making at the door.

"Git away from that—every one of you—you onery vagabonds!" came the voice. "Mesk tracks at once or I'll let you full of lead!"

And if by magic the assault on the door ceased, and as Lee glanced through the window he saw the Indians falling back rapidly, while Reeder, followed closely by Ray, was advancing upon them. Both Reeder and Ray had their rifles drawn, and there was that in the look on the face of the old trapper that boded no good to the red men.

As he came close to the Indians he made a little run forward and kicked the leader vigorously.

"Now, you onery loafer, clear out!" he cried. "I shall report your doings to the Indian Agent and see what he can do for you!"

"Sioux heap good friends," said the savage, making a wry face and hurrying out of the way.

"We don't want your friendship," cried Reeder. "Git out! The further you can do is to keep away from here. Now move on!"

With which the Indians obeyed, walking rapidly up the slope and never looking back till they were out of sight.

"I reckon the critters 'spected you a purty bad scare," the old trapper said to Lee as he opened the door and entered the cabin.

"Well, I guess they had me about as badly scared as I have been in many a day," confessed Lee. "Gee whiz! but I was glad when I heard your voice. I felt like shouting."

"You didn't let them in the cabin?"

"No, but I suppose they would have gotten in pretty soon if you had not arrived. Do you think they will come back and try to revenge themselves on us?"

"Not likely. As a rule they are cowards, and the rougher you treat them the better they will treat you, especially the kind that go about stealing and plundering."

Ray, who had gone back a little way, now approached the cabin, bearing a couple of minks that had been caught in the traps and which had been disturbed as the Indians were seen at the door.

"This is quite a little beginnin'," Reeder remarked as he took up the animals and stroked their soft fur.

While he skinned the minks Lee and Ray fell to work to prepare dinner, for it was now past noon, and during the journey Lee related his trip to the island and his meeting with some of the Indians.

"It seems strange that they would go to the island and take up their abode," remarked Ray. "And it does seem strange that the old man should have come to this wild place with a young girl to live, especially as he don't hunt or trap, as you said.

"It is a little queer," agreed Lee, "but he has a reason and promised to tell me all about it at some other time."

"I think I shall have to go over with you the next time you call," said Ray with a smile. "It isn't fair for you to monopolize the company of Miss Murphy, even if you are an old friend."

"I am sure she will be delighted," said Lee. "I think I shall be over again tomorrow."

"It was decided that Reeder should return to Gray Rock the following day to bring some more traps and an additional supply of provisions, and till the old trapper had looked well over the ground had they decided to remain here for the season.

The next morning, however, they were confronted with a misfortune that promised to interfere seriously with their plans. The horse that belonged to Lee, which had been picketed in the little valley, was gone.

"That they were stolen there could be little doubt, for the animal was picketed and there was no sign of their having been dragged, so it was clearly the work of some thief.

"I reckon it was them onery redskins that was here yesterday," Reeder declared.

To add to the seriousness of the situation, a rain fell during the night and the trail, which might have been followed without much difficulty, was almost obliterated.

Lee and the old trapper took their rifles and started on the trail; however, but they were not able to follow it far. But they continued onward in the direction the thief had entered the valley, and, of course, and in the direction of the Indian village.

"It's the work of them redskins, an' no doubt," declared Reeder, as after proceeding through the drizzling rain, though Reeder felt that it was a fruitless quest. The thieves, wherever they were, were probably many and many a mile away from the place by this time, and after hours of weary tramping over hill and across valley they turned their faces toward the cabin by the Spirit Lake.

They had reached the shore of the lake and were within a couple of miles of home, the cabin when the rain, that had been coming down in a slow drizzle, began to fall in torrents. The wind had shifted to the north and the day was chill.

Realizing that they must soon be drenched to the skin, Reeder and Lee sought the shelter of some sheltering rocks that ran along a cliff bordering the lake.

Pushing their way through a dense growth of bushes that grew under the sheltering rocks, they found a comfortable shelter from the very disagreeable storm.

The eddying wind had swept a great mass of dead leaves into the nook, and on these the two found a most comfortable resting place, Lee, half buried in a mass of leaves, half reclined against the rocky wall, while Reeder, lighting his pipe, sat puffing in silence.

The roaring of the wind sounded dismally through the rocks and the pouring rain fell in great sheets. Through an opening in the thicket Lee could get a view of the lake. The waves were rolling high, and over it swept the gray sheets of rain.

It was a dark, dismal day, such a day as one enjoys when sitting by a cheerful fire listening to the beat of the rain on the roof and the moaning of the wind without.

For a long time Lee watched the sweeping gray sheets of rain on the lake, feeling a sense of delicious comfort in the snug nook and a thankfulness for the shelter.

And, sitting thus, he fell asleep. How long he slept he never knew, but when he awoke at last it was pitch dark all about him. For a moment he was too greatly confused to remember where he was. He rose abruptly and sat up, trying to penetrate the gloom about him.

The rustle of the leaves on which he had been reclining brought back the memory of where he was, and he called quickly to Reeder, but there was no response.

He first thought the old trapper had left the cabin, and again he called to him, this time louder than before.

There was no response. Again and again he called, but the sound came to him over save the moaning of the wind among the rocks and the rustling of the leaves and of the waters of the lake on the rocky shore.

CHAPTER IX.
DISAPPEARED.

A vague sense of alarm came over Lee. What had happened while he had been sleeping? Surely the old trapper was gone else he must have responded to Lee's call.

Hastily striking a match, the youth rose and peered about him. Reeder was gone. For a moment Lee could hardly believe that he was fully awake.

It was absurd to think that the old trapper would go away and leave him, yet Lee could see with his own eyes that he was gone. Then something must have happened. What was it?

The amazed and bewildered youth pushed his way through the tangled brush till he reached the shore of the lake, where he stood listening, vainly trying to penetrate the gloom. The rain was still falling, with now and then a flash of lightning and with it and the wind was raw and chill.

Lee now shouted again and again, but his voice rang out in the darkness, but there came no reply.

It was plain that Reeder was gone, and as Lee fully realized the old trapper would not have left without making his intentions known.

Something had happened to him—but what?

There was little use of trying to solve the puzzle, and after taking a turn or two through the thicket in a vain search for the old trapper, Lee returned to the cave and turned his face toward the cabin.

As he hurried along the shore of the lake he heard a strange cry, and, stopping abruptly, he gazed about him.

He could see nothing, for the night was dark almost to blackness. The cry he had heard appeared to come from over the lake and as he turned his gaze in that direction the cry was repeated.

Then there was a sudden flame of light that seemed to rise out of the water of the lake. For an instant it rose up like a luminous vapor, and then, like a great white star shining through the driving rain, it hung and veiled, it revealed a sight that sent a cold shiver up the spinal column of the youth.

Obscurely outlined, he saw a great white canoe, and standing erect in it was the ghostly figure he had seen a few days before on the lake.

He stood dazed and motionless, while the canoe sped on its way as if propelled by invisible hands.

Only an instant was it visible, then the light went out and the blackness of the night closed down.

Lee stood as if rooted to the spot, staring into the darkness. Then he turned with a sudden impulse to rush from the spot and ran forward down the lake, but he checked himself.

Could it be that this strange apparition had had a motive for its visit in the appearance of Reeder? The very thought seemed absurd, and yet what else could it be?

While Lee could not shake off a sort of creepy feeling at the uncanny sight just witnessed, he felt a sense of relief at the fact that the old trapper had expressed the belief that he had seen the canoe and the strange persons who were up to some sort of mischief. At last one person in the cabin could be became convinced of this and he was moved by a sudden impulse to try to solve the mystery.

He walked to the margin of the lake and followed it for some yards, at last reaching his ears being the dismal moaning of the wind among the rocks and the washing of the waves along the shore.

For the next hour he listened, waiting and listening, but there was no sign of life.

The rain was now fast turning to snow, and the air became correspondingly damp and adhesive, piling upon rock and bush and clinging to the branches of the trees.

He shivered with the cold as he again turned his steps down the lake.

The fear of becoming lost was so strong that he did not venture to go far from the water's edge, but continued his course, following the winding shore of the lake.

As he made his way through the thick gloom his mind was busy going over the events of the last few days.

At first everything had pointed to a quiet and successful season of trapping, but now quickly the unexpected events had followed. The loss of his team of ponies was no small

TO READERS OF THE
LADIES' HOME JOURNAL:

Did you read the article published by The Ladies' Home Journal in May 1904, attacking Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription? Have you seen the statement more recently made by the same publication? We wish you to know the truth.

Four days after the article in May 1904, appeared, Dr. Pierce's company sued The Ladies' Home Journal publishers for libel. The trial was had in April last. Dr. Pierce proved that the attack made by The Ladies' Home Journal was false. He proved that Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription *does not, and never did* contain alcohol nor any of the injurious drugs which The Ladies' Home Journal falsely stated it did contain. This was so conclusively shown that the attorneys for The Ladies' Home Journal *were forced to admit it.* The jury rendered a verdict against The Ladies' Home Journal in favor of Dr. Pierce's company for $16,000.00. This was a complete vindication of Doctor Pierce and his "Favorite Prescription." It judicially established that the libel was *wholly* false, and without any justification.

Dr. Pierce, however, believed that his company is justly entitled to a verdict for a much larger sum. Therefore, applied to the court for a new trial of the case. For this reason, and for this reason alone, has The Ladies' Home Journal not yet paid "a single penny to Dr. R. V. Pierce's concern." Dr. Pierce has simply chosen not to collect the judgment until the motion for a new trial has been decided.

In the light of these facts does not this boastful statement that it "has not paid a single penny to Dr. R. V. Pierce's concern" look like a cheap and common bluff, a half truth intended to mislead you?

During the trial of the libel suit against the above mentioned publishers, Dr. Lee H. Smith, Vice-President of the World's Dispensary Medical Association, *stated under oath* that the ingredients of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription were wholly extracted from the following native roots: Golden Seal, Blue Cohosh, Lady's Slipper Black Cohosh and Unicorn by means of pure *grain alcohol of proper strength.* He was asked how he knew, as a physician and experienced medical man, that the "Favorite Prescription" was a cure for the diseases peculiar to women, such as "female weakness, prolapsus, retroversion, irregular and painful periods," and other diseases of the woman's organs, and he stated that he knew such was the fact because of his own experience and the many thousands of women whose ills he has personally treated. [illegible] Favorite Prescription."

[illegible] of Dr. [illegible] Pierce's [illegible] standard [illegible] Pierce's Favorite Prescription [illegible] the various ingredients in the [illegible] herbs. Dr. Smith looked up [illegible] of these authorities as to the curative value of the above roots from the standard works, such as the United States Dispensatory, The American Dispensatory, Organic Materia Medica, by Grover Coe, M. D.; Materia Medica, by Bentley & Redwood; [illegible] Practice of Medicine, by Prof. John King, M. D.; Eclectic Practice of Medicine, by Prof. John M. Scudder, M. D.; Eclectic Practice of Medicine, by Prof. John M. Scudder, M. D.; Eclectic Practice of Medicine, by Prof. John M. Scudder, M. D.; [illegible]

item, but the inconvenience the loss would entail would render it still more serious.

Then there was the visit of the Indians, who might return to take revenge for the treatment they had received, and, last, there was the strange disappearance of the old trapper.

That something serious had happened to him Lee had but little doubt, and the more he thought of the matter the more puzzled he became.

"If things keep on in this way," he mused, "I shall be mighty glad when we get away from the place."

He had not a faint idea of what time of night it was. He might have slept many hours and it might now be far into the night.

He wondered if Ray was still up and if he would have a good fire burning, for he was chilled to the bone.

How glad he would be if he should only find the old trapper there when he arrived at the cabin; but the sad type of this Reeder would not have gone away without calling him.

Lee soon found the shore of the lake so rough that he was compelled to turn some distance away from it in order to continue his course.

As he entered the timber he was compelled to grope his way, and now and then he would bring up with a bump against some huge boulder or the trunk of a tree.

In this way he continued to travel as rapidly as possible.

Despite every precaution, he soon became bewildered in the darkness and lost his way. It took him fully half an hour to find his way back to the lake shore, and not till then did he get his bearing.

He was so confused by the darkness that

"Now you ornery loafer clear out."

he lost all sense of direction, and when he began following the margin of the lake again it appeared to him that he was traveling in the opposite direction to that he had been pursuing before becoming lost.

It was only by reflecting that in order to reach the old cabin he must follow the shore keeping the lake on his left, that he could convince himself that he was not traveling in the wrong direction.

When at last a light gleamed through the falling snow and he saw the rude outlines of a cabin ahead, he was not sure that this was the place of his destination.

So many queer things had happened of late that he was ready for anything that might happen. So he approached the cabin with caution, determined to make no mistake.

As he came from the woods and descended the path he could see the interior of the cabin through the little hole of a window in the side of the building.

A bright fire was burning in the fireplace, and his heart leaped with joy as he saw the familiar form of Ray Donaldson within.

Ray was sitting on a stool before the blazing fire, quite all absorbed in the examination of something lying on the floor before him.

But a single glance through the window told Lee that the old trapper had not returned.

As Lee walked toward the door he paused a moment to look in. Ray was still absorbed in contemplating the object before him, and as Lee saw what it was he stood stock still, staring straight before him as if petrified.

Was he dreaming? Or what did it mean?

It was no wonder that Lee asked himself these questions, for Ray was holding in his hands a great roll of bills—hundred dollar bills. Lee could see by the bright light that fell from the blazing logs, and in front of him, lying in heaps on the floor, were piles of similar bills—thousands and thousands of dollars.

CHAPTER X.

RAY TELLS OF A STRANGE PROWLER.

Amazed, Lee stood as if petrified.

He could hardly believe the evidence of his senses, and for a moment he half believed that it was all a dream. Then he opened the door and entered.

Ray was so deeply absorbed in the contemplation of the wealth before him that he had forgotten everything else, and as Lee burst into the room he started up with a half smothered cry.

"Great Scott!" cried Lee. "Where did you get all that money?"

Ray made a swift motion toward the other skins that were now lying unrolled on the floor.

"A rat cut the cords that bound them," he said, "and when I picked them up all this money dropped out. What can it mean, Lee?"

But Lee was too amazed to speak, and stood regarding the pile of bills as if rooted to the spot.

Then he stooped down and took up a handful of the bills, began to examine them.

"Could it be possible that he moved from where he was sitting and fell asleep?"

"It might have been, yet I looked carefully all through the thicket under the shelving rocks. Besides, I am not sure that he would have moved as we had a most comfortable place where we were."

"Well, I give it up. I hope he will be in shortly, for I would give a great deal to have him here just now. If he don't show up we will go back to the place you last saw him and see what we can find out. But great guns! What are we to do with all this money in the meantime? It won't do to leave it here in the cabin, and it would never do to go lugging it about with us?"

"We'll have to hide it," replied Lee. "I don't know where, but we've got to do."

The boys fell to work gathering up the piles of bills, and as they replaced them in the pelts of the skins counted them.

"Ten thousand, one hundred and seventy-four dollars," said Ray when the work was finished. "Great Caesar, Lee, just think of having all this money in our possession! It makes me nervous to think about it."

"We ought to go to Gray Rock as soon as possible and take it with us," remarked Lee. "I don't like the idea of keeping it in our possession a moment longer than we can help."

"Shall we put it in the express office and say nothing about its contents," asked Ray.

"I hardly know what to do about it."

"It seems to me it would be a very risky thing to put so large amount of money in the express office without making it known to the agent. If it were lost the owner could never recover anything for it."

"I guess that's right. I wish we could see this Filley before we do anything with the money. If, by some mistake, he had got the money into the parcel, it might prove a serious matter to the owner."

"I think we should explain the whole affair to the express agent and take a receipt for the skins and the entire amount of money," said Ray. "Then, if anything should turn up that it was lost, we should not be to blame."

Having replaced the money in the parcel, the boys grew more and more merry with the strong cords. When this was done they put it carefully away under the bunk in the corner.

"Now you want some supper, I suppose," said Ray, as he heaped the steaming coffee from the fire "and while you are eating I will cook up some of my own adventures during the day."

Shortly after you left this morning I saw some muskrats swimming in the lake, and I took my rifle and got into the canoe and went out to see if I could not get some of them.

"I followed along the shore to the north and shot a couple. Then I turned into an arm of the lake and swung in behind the high rocks just north of here.

"I was about to turn back when I saw something scamper up the slope, and a second glance told me it was a mink. So I ran the canoe ashore and started after it.

"As I ascended the slope I suddenly caught sight of some dark object standing in the edge of the thicket at the top of the bluff, and as I came a little nearer I saw that it was a man—a stranger to me.

"It was plain that he had not discovered my approach, and I could see that he was watching the cabin. I stood for a little time watching him. Then, as I turned around a huge boulder to ascend to where he was, my foot struck a rock and I stumbled. I guess he must have heard the sound for when I looked up he was gone.

"I hurried to the place where I had seen him, but not the slightest trace could I find of him. Who was he, and what did he want? These are the questions that have been vexing me all day."

CHAPTER XI.

MURPHY'S STORY.

"I looked all along the bluff for the stranger," went on Ray, "and I think I explored every nook and corner, but the fellow was gone as completely as if he had never existed."

"I must have had a lookout for him all day, but he has been careful not to show his head in the open. I can understand why the fellow was prowling about here for."

"You do not mean to say that Reeder—"

"Oh, yes, quite sure. I could not get a very good view of his face, but I think he was the same fellow I saw."

"It might have been some of Frank Mitchell's crowd."

"It might have been," agreed Ray, "yet I hardly think so, but it will pay us to keep our eyes open. This fellow, whoever he is, must be up to some mischief."

It was late that night when the boys at last fastened the door and retired to their bunk.

The next morning when the boys arose they found about four inches of damp, clinging snow on the ground.

The first thing on the program for the day was to visit the trap where Reeder had last been seen and try to discover something of the mystery of his disappearance.

But before leaving it was necessary to hide the parcel containing the money, and this they did by carefully lifting one of the puncheon slabs from the floor and placing the parcel beneath. Then the puncheon was replaced.

"I guess it will be safe enough there," remarked Ray.

They fastened the door of the cabin and hurried up the shore of the lake.

A half hour's walk brought them to the cliffs where Lee and the old trapper had taken refuge from the storm, and they paused at the thicket and made a close search in every direction without finding the slightest clew.

The snow had covered any possible trail that Reeder might have left as he departed and the boys saw but little that could be done to solve the mystery of his disappearance.

They lingered about the place for nearly an hour and then, finding nothing that seemed to offer a clue to the matter, they returned to the cabin.

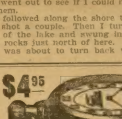
What next to do was the question.

"We ought to go to Gray Rock and get this parcel and money off our hands as soon as possible," said Ray, "but there can be nothing what may happen here. There have been so many unexpected events in the last day or so that I am prepared for almost anything. But how are we to get away since the lake is frozen?"

"We might hire one of some squatter. I think there is one a mile or two south, on a little creek. At least there was one there a few days ago."

"Do you know if he has a team?"

"I think so, for I saw a ramshackle sort



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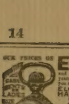

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of wagon near the cabin and some sheds back of it."

"Suppose I take a run over there and see if we can get the team?"

"All right, but as it would be rather late to try to make the trip home today, suppose we get the team this evening, if it can be got, and take an early start in the morning. Meantime Reeder may turn up."

"That will be a good plan, and we ought to visit the traps that are out, for we have not been to them since the day before yesterday."

"That is just what I was going to suggest."

"It was an hour past noon when they returned from the traps empty-handed.

"I guess there is truth in the old saying that bad luck never comes single," remarked Ray. "It looks as if we were in for a season of bad luck."

When Ray was ready to start for the squatter's cabin, Lee took the canoe and paddled him across the arm of the lake, and on his return Lee stopped at the island.

He found the old man and Deasie sitting by a cheerful fire, the father smoking his pipe and Deasie reading a book.

The night glad party came greeted Murphy as Lee was ushered into the room. "It is a nasty, disagreeable day, and I felt as if I wanted some one to talk to."

"As if I were not some one," smiled Deasie.

"Oh, you are too busy with your books, the latest, perhaps, from the pen of Ouida, to have a talk with Lee. How are you getting on, my boy?"

"We are having the worst luck in the world," replied Lee, and he proceeded to relate all that had occurred since his last visit, giving an account of the visit of the Indians, the loss of the traps and their queer disappearance of the old trapper.

"Great guns!" exclaimed Murphy, "you are having a run of bad luck sure enough. And you have no idea what could have become of your missing friend?"

"Not the least in the world," replied Lee, and then he went on to tell of the queer apparition he had twice seen in the white canoe. "And the third time was it," he continued, "it was passing between the shore and this island."

Deasie's eyes grew big with excitement as she listened to Lee, and there was a puzzled expression on the face of her father.

"That's a queer business," he said, thoughtfully. "I can't understand it."

"Ugh! It makes me shiver to think of it!" cried Deasie. "What if it should come on the next visit?"

"I hardly think it will venture to make any more visits," said Lee, reassuring her. "I would think it was some one merely playing a prank, but the place and the time are hardly compatible with such a view. However, I shall keep a lookout for your apparition, or whatever it may be, on my visit it, and try to discover what it is up to," he added, turning to the old man, "we were here the other day," he went on, "I promised to call on you this afternoon, but as I am here in this out of the way place with my daughter. Let me begin at the beginning, so you will understand it all."

"About two years ago I went to the gold fields of California, and there met a man by the name of Hamilton—Peter Hamilton, a man of some fifty years of age. We soon became warm friends, and were a great deal much together, and were like unfortunate in our mining claims.

"Finally, being discouraged, we decided to go on a prospecting tour in the mining country then new to prospectors. We struck rich placer diggings, and inside of three months had made a fortune of about thirty thousand dollars between us.

"When our digging had been played out we did not do like many others, who, once getting the gold fever, are never satisfied with what they get—no matter how much—but decided to quit the mines at once.

"We got us a pair of mules, a wagon and a wagon and started for the East, first placing our gold in heavy canvas bags in two boxes, which we stored in the bottom of our wagon beneath all our other effects. It was agreed in case we were to die, that neither of us cared to entrust to the care of others our hard-earned fortune, for the first time in my life I felt rich. It is a good feeling for one of my years who has had to struggle along for years barely making a living.

"We were about as happy a pair as one could find as we drove gayly on our way. We stopped at Santa Fe for a week, and then fell in with a big train and came to Independence, Mo., then the starting point for most of the trains crossing the plains.

"During our trip Hamilton had talked a great deal of the land and timber of northern Iowa and southern Minnesota, and he urged me to go thither with him and look at the country. He was sure that our fortunes would bring us the best results and be safest by investing in the rich land in that region.

"I was much impressed at his glowing account of the country, and finally decided to accompany him to the North. And now comes the strange part of my story," went on Murphy, pausing to light his pipe.

In next week's issue of this paper the reader will find the very stirring concluding chapters of this story. The management has in stock some of the best stories for the boys ever written. These will appear in these pages during the coming months. If you desire the Ledger regularly please note our advertisement of free premiums on pages thirteen and fifteen and subscribe at once.

Old Eckersal's Deputy.

(Continued from Page Five.)

Lindsay was no dissembler. His nature was too frank and honest for such a part. Under Nita's tearful rebuke he remained silent.

"My dear mother's handwriting is too well known to me, though many years may have passed, for me to be mistaken," continued Nita, "and I insist that the address on those letters, Mort, was that penned by my father!"

The deputy evaded the appealing look fastened on his face. He could not answer with a downright lie, for he knew only too well knew what momentous results might hang on his answer.

"Answer me!" cried Nita, slowly rising from her chair.

"Nita, it seems to be, and what he really is," replied Lindsay, "are two different things."

"Does Dan believe him to be my father? Does his fiancee believe that photograph?"

"Wait till Dan comes back, Nita," said Lindsay. "He can tell you about this a good deal better than I can."

"I want to know now!" declared the girl. "You must tell me!"

There was no avoiding the issue.

"Nita, you say that he claims to be." Nita recied as though about to fall. Lindsay and Edgerton both sprang toward her, but she recovered herself and waved them back. "What of it, Nita," demanded Lindsay. "Suppose he does claim to be your father? It can't make much difference with you."

She gazed at him dumbly for a space.

"You don't realize what it means, Mort," Nita went on, slowly. "It makes an awful difference with me. Suppose he were not only not what my father was, and claimed to be, but—but—" she wrung her hands.

Edgerton, astounded and mystified, by what he had heard, stood just within the circle of lamplight, leaning listlessly against the mantel over the fireplace. Lindsay turned on him angrily.

"I told you to wait," he said he. "What Nita is saying does not interest you."

"Pardon me, Lindsay," spoke up Nita, in a low voice, dropping her hands.

"Am I to understand, Nita," inquired Edgerton, "that you have been under the impression to get out of this house, and who has now the right to do the mulls and the like for your father?"

"You're to understand nothin' of the sort," returned Lindsay, fiercely. "Nita is all unnerved by what has happened here today, and don't know what she's sayin'."

Nita looked at Lindsay with a pathetic little smile. She was beginning to understand why he was seeking to hide the prisoner's identity.

"I understand Edgerton," she said, "this man whom Mort kept out of my sight in the past year was not my father. From what we overheard at Spencer's we know that there is no doubt of his guilt.

"I have thought of my father by day and dreamed of him by night. I have hoped and prayed for his release, and now he is free to me. And this, this, is the realization of my fondest dreams!"

Her face was deathly white, but she preserved considerable calm.

"Dan and Mort would have spared me this, but I have learned it in spite of them. Mr. Father was a gambler, and was guilty of worse things before he came to French Creek years ago, was he not, Mort?"

Edgerton's face was almost as pale as Nita's. For a moment he seemed at a loss, then he asked hoarsely:

"Isn't there any possibility of mistake?"

"No," replied Nita, her eyes gazing him strangely.

"But no one knows of it apart from Dan and Lindsay, you and I," Edgerton went on; "no one else can possibly know—"

"My father knows of it," broke in Nita, "and you say he has escaped. But, even if he does not, he cannot long remain, for overtakes him and he yields up his ill-spent life, I shall make no secret of our relationship."

"Think of all that would mean, Nita!" murmured Edgerton, imploringly.

"It means the most perfect bitterness of soul for me," the girl replied. "It can mean nothing else to you or to any one else. Can it?"

She flung the question at him abruptly, still regarding him with her unfathomable eyes.

"It means our future happiness, Nita," cried Edgerton, "yours and mine! If this awful affliction be forgotten for a time, and but to you and your friends we can avoid the consequences!"

"What consequences?" she demanded slowly, a glint of scorn coming into her look.

"You must know, Nita. Good heavens! it isn't possible that you fail to understand the full significance of such a revelation as you would make."

"Lieutenant Edgerton," said she, her voice wondrously calm, "would such a revelation make any difference with that question you asked me, and which I was to answer on my return from San Francisco?"

"Don't put it in that way, Nita," he returned wildly. "I have told you of my people—"

"I am not thinking of your people just now, but of you. Is a man's love so paltry a thing that it can live for a deception or fail by a revelation of the truth? Is it in the keeping of his people, or in his own?"

Edgerton launched into an incoherent defense of himself.

"Excuses are not what I had expected to hear from you, Lieutenant Edgerton," said Nita, her eyes flashing, "and I have had quite enough of them. I shall not wait until my return from San Francisco before giving you an answer. You know what it is, I think, and it is final. I hope you will leave this house and that I shall never see you again!"

Edgerton, despairing and desperate, started toward her, but found himself confronted by the Deputy.

"If there is a spark of manhood about you," said Lindsay, sternly, "you will leave as you have been told to do. Your horse is somewhere outside, and I guess you can find him without much trouble. But, if you can't that is your own lookout."

Lindsay pointed to the door with one hand while the other groped for the revolver which Eckersal had given him. Edgerton stood irresolute for a moment, then wheeled and bolted from the room.

Lindsay turned around. "Mort!" whispered Nita, facing about.

"Well?" he asked, taking a step nearer.

"You would have spared me this knowledge of the prisoner's identity, and you would have kept it from Lieutenant Edgerton, even while you—you—"

"Yes, Nita," he said, passionately, "even while I love you with my whole heart and soul and life, and your happiness little girl, that Dan and I were thinkin' of."

"You would have sacrificed your own happiness for mine?"

"My own happiness and my own life, if they would count for your good."

She fluttered toward him with a sob and was caught her in his arms and held her close.

(The End.)

A Lass O' London.

(Continued on page three.)

words which reddened Captain Cassingham's face.

He suddenly dcisted and stepping back, laid his hand on his sword hilt.

"I'll draw it like lightning before the headsman gets at you," he cried.

But the next moment I forced myself forward, despite the hands at my back and, lifting my arm, landed it on the Captain's stomach, sending him across the pave and into the filthy gutter.

There was a perfect howl of rage from him throat as he scrambled to his feet with his sword drawn.

He was a sight for the gods.

Not an inch of his shabby clothes were free from the reekingness of the gutter.

His hair like a dead perch and I could not repress a laugh as I surveyed him.

He would have attacked me with his sword if the others had not interfered, and it required all their authority to persuade Captain Cassingham of the King's horse, not to run me through and save the headsman a job.

He turned away at last.

Surrounded by the constable's posse, I was marched off to the prison and locked over the stones of London, I knew not whither.

The fox had been caught at last!

But I was at Queen Bess's power and I doubted not that I would feel the full weight of it.

My sword and clothes were at the Red Bullock, and I now cursed myself for mas-querading in other people's garments.

Half an hour later, I was confronted by a higher officer and taken to one of the fouliest prisons in London, where the iron door clanged like a note of doom.

This ends the first and extraordinary story of love and tragedy will be continued in the following week's issue. If you are not already a subscriber, we strongly urge you to send in your subscription and get the remainder of this fascinating story. Many other thrilling masterpieces that are about to appear in these columns. Boys and girls may desire our free cameras, as announced on pages thirteen, and women should subscribe and receive our premium list of the new summer styles, as advertised on page fifteen of this paper.

Some Difference.

H. J. Allen, an editor of Ottawa, Kan., while electioneering for Congress among the farmers of his district took with him the champion corn husker of the state.

"You see," said Mr. Allen to a reporter, "while I argue and plead the corn husker pitches in and husks corn for the farmer. Then the farmer's time is not wasted. While he stands idle listening to me the corn husker carries on the work of the farm for him.

"Between listening to me the crowd goes back and listening while the work goes forward loses a lot of time. Now, understand, yet it is one which has a remarkable effect on the impression I create. In this way it is a certain compliment.

"One man said to another:

"'I pleased Allen, Brown tremendously, the other night by asking her if she was herself or her daughter. And I couldn't tell them apart.'

The other man frowned.

"'That's ridiculous,' he muttered. 'I worked the same scheme on the daughter and she didn't like it worth a cent.'

Breaking the News.

Foreman (at the door)—Did yer husband hov a few suit av clo'es on this mornin', Mrs. O'Malley?

Mrs. O'Malley—He did.

Foreman—They're rooined entirely.

Mrs. O'Malley—How did it happen?

Foreman—He was blowed up be a charge av dinnymite.

THE QUEEN'S GUESS.

A FAIRY TALE.

Once upon a time there was a miller who was very, very poor, but he considered himself rich in one possession—he had a very beautiful daughter.

So, when, one day, he found himself face to face with the King, instead of cringing before him, he called out:

"I have a daughter fit to be the wife of a king. She is beautiful in face and form, and can spin the poorest straw into finest gold."

"So?" interrogated the King. "I shall put your daughter to the proof, then. Bring her to my castle this very day, and she shall have a chance to show her marvelous skill."

When the miller's daughter arrived at the castle, the King took her into a room that was filled with straw, and there he left her with a spinning wheel, saying:

"If, indeed, you can do as your father claims, I shall expect to find all this straw spun into gold by dawn tomorrow. Do it, or die."

The poor miller's daughter, locked in and alone for the night, wept in despair. Why had her father made such an idle boast? How could she ever satisfy the King's demand? Alas! she could only say her prayers and prepare to die!

But just as she was thinking this last thought the door flew open and a tiny, long-bearded man made his appearance.

"Weeping?" he asked. "Why weeping, sad maiden?"

"Because all this straw must be spun into gold, or I die tomorrow," sighed the miller's daughter.

"So?" asked the little man. "Now, supposing I do it for you. What reward shall I have?"

"My necklace?" inquired the maiden; "will you accept it?"

"Good!" And, thrusting the necklace into his pouch, the little man sat down to the spinning wheel and began to spin with furious speed. And this he did all night long, until just at dawn all the straw had been spun and the spools were full of gold, and the little man slipped away.

Then the King hastened to the room, and when he beheld the quantities of gold his eyes gleamed with joy. But such a greedy king he was!

Next to this room was another and larger room filled with straw. Hither he led the miller's daughter and commanded her to convert all this straw into gold by dawn of the next day or she would surely die. With that he stalked away.

Again the maiden fell to bitter weeping, thinking that now all hope was gone indeed. But again the little old man appeared and looked first at her, then the straw.

"Humph! Another night's task! Greedy pig of a king! Well, how shall I be rewarded if I spin all this straw into gold for you?"

"Will you take this ring from my finger?" asked the maiden.

"Yes." And, taking the ring, the little old man sat down to the spinning wheel and set to work even more furiously than the night before, there being so much more straw to spin.

"Next morning, to the King's delight, there was a pile of glittering gold! But his greed was not yet satisfied. So the poor maiden was conducted into a third and yet larger room, stuffed so full of straw that there was barely room for the spinning wheel and the girl herself.

"By tomorrow morning have all this straw spun into gold and you shall become my bride," said the King, for he had concluded that even a miller's daughter who could spin straw into gold would be a more desirable wife than the richest princess on the face of the earth.

"Woe is me! Will the little old man come to my rescue now?" sighed the unhappy maiden.

"Here I am," replied the little old man, suddenly appearing. "But what shall be my reward if I do this heaviest task of all for you?"

"Alas! What can I offer you?"

"Will you, when you have become queen, make me a present of your first-born?"

"Yes," promised the maiden without hesitation, since she had no idea the King would really fulfill his promise and make her his wife.

But, when, at dawn, the King found that every straw in the huge room had been spun into spools and spools of pure gold, he did not go back on his promise, but ordered the court to be prepared for his wedding, and in a few days made the miller's daughter his queen.

The next year a handsome little son was born to the King and Queen, and the entire court and nation were filled with rejoicing.

But, strange to say, the Queen had clean forgotten her promise to the little old man, so great was her consternation when his sudden appearance in her chamber one day brought it back to her remembrance.

"I have come for my promised present," he announced.

"No, no, no!" implored the Queen. "You shall have a palace and gold dishes and new-hatched servants, but spare me my child!" and she wept as if her heart would break.

Then the old man, relenting, made her a proposition:

"If in three days' time you can discover and tell me my name, you may keep your child."

So, for three days and nights the Queen made frantic efforts to discover the little old man's name. Each day he returned to hear reports, and each day she guessed a dozen different names in vain.

"No; you have not found out my name," he said.

But the third and last day one of the agents whom she had sent out to find out the names of all the old people in the land, in making a report of his adventures, said:

"On my return from the border I passed through the lonely woods where the foxes and hares are said to wish themselves good night. And here I spied a tiny hut, in which I saw an open fire, and, capering before it, a little old man, whom I heard singing joyfully:

"'This day I brew, next day I bake,
The third day I the Queen's child take.
For 'tis a secret from the royal dame
That Rumpelkittstin is my name.'"

Oh, how happy was the distracted Queen to hear the name "Rumpelkittstin!" She had no doubt at all that it was the right name, and she repeated it over and over again, so that she might be sure not to forget it at the critical moment.

Then, for the last time, the little old man made his appearance and asked:

"Well, what is my name?"

The Queen pretended to be guessing, as usual.

"Is it Frederick?"

"No."

"Is it Jason?"

"No."

"Is it—R—Rum—Rumpelkittstin?"

"How did you find it out? What wicked fairies told on me?" shrieked the surprised and enraged old man; and his little body a shock so with excitement that he had a stroke and fell dead at the feet of the Queen, whose heart was divided between gratitude for her own escape and pity for the old man's fate.

He—Does Miss Peachy get her beautiful complexion from her father?

She—Goodness, no! He has been out of the drug business a long time.

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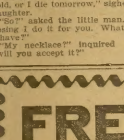
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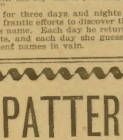
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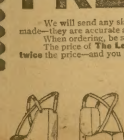
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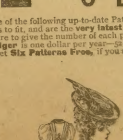
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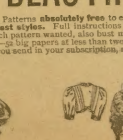
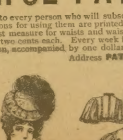

5426 LOOSE FITTING COAT 32 TO 42 BUST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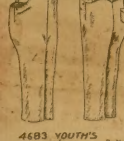
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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

THE MISSES AT SCHOOL.

There was once a school
Where the mistress, Miss Rule,
Taught a number of misses that vexed her;
Miss Chief was the lass
At the end of the class,
And young Miss Demeanor was next her.

Poor little Miss Hap
Spilled the ink in her lap,
And Miss Fortune fell under the table;
Miss Conduct they all
Did a Miss Creant call,
But Miss State declared this was a fable.

Miss Lay lost her book,
And Miss Lead undertook
To show her the place where to find it;
But upon the wrong nail
Had Miss Place hung her veil,
And Miss Deed hid the book safe behind it.

They went on very well,
As I have heard tell,
Till Miss Take bowed in Miss Understanding;
Miss Conjecture then guessed
Evil things of the rest,
And Miss Counsel advised their disbanding.

In Grandma's Garden.

It was just the loveliest garden in the world, at least Eleanor thought so. She lived in the city, and could only have window-gardens. But grandma's was the sunniest, sweetest, shadiest, greenest garden in the world, and had so many kinds of flowers—great tall tiger-lilies, sweet-williams, marigolds, cockscombs, bachelor's-buttons and roses—just loads of roses.

She fell asleep thinking about it, and after a little while she awoke, still thinking about it. She would go down to the garden and see if the angel would come. This decided she slipped out of bed and crept down the stairs and out of the hall door.

It was a very, very warm night. Perhaps that was why she hadn't stayed sound asleep, as usual. It was rather dark outdoors, but a light shone out from the sitting-room window, where the family were, and about it the trees Eleanor could see the hammock she loved to swing in in daytime. She could see the phlox quite plainly as she sat in that. It was the very place to wait.

She watched and watched, but the angel did not come, and pretty soon there was a dear little girl fast asleep in the hammock out in the old garden.

She couldn't have been there so very long, because mamma had been up once in the evening and Eleanor was in her own little bed; but when mamma and papa and everybody went upstairs to bed there was no little girlie there! Oh, how frightened they were for a while!

"Where's Sadie? Perhaps she has walked in her sleep." So they looked all around the house, and then went outdoors. Papa and Uncle Will thought of her places in the garden. They went to her cubby-house down under the apple tree, but she wasn't there. They went to her rainy-day playhouse in the old woodshed, but she wasn't there.

At last they found her. "Don't wake her right away," said papa. "Isn't she a picture? I want the rest to see her." So they went to call the others.

AN OARFULL TALE.

There once was a bug in a pea-pod boat
Who sang as he rowed: "On the sea I dote."
And the sea never looked forward, but rowed straight in
To the watery home of the Baron de Fin.
And the Baron de Fin said: "How glad he will be
When he finds that he's rowing right straight into me."
So he opened his mouth and the bug said: "Ouch!
I knew I'd make port, for I know how to row."
And the Baron de Fin gave a satisfied grin
And said: "What a joy when one's meals come right in."

There were such quantities you could pick handfuls and they would not be missed. Such a delightful place to be in!

Eleanor once did a journey living with the bachelor's-buttons. She had heard grandma call Uncle Will an "old bachelor," and as she sat, seeing the ball hanging behind the door, she sewed some of the flowers all down the front of it. How they all laughed when he went to put it on, and Eleanor explained why she did it.

But the very funniest thing she ever did happened last summer. Grandma and she were out in the garden one beautiful summer morning. They were always the first ones up, so they could have a little walk in the garden before breakfast and pick flowers for the table with the dew on them.

This morning Eleanor spied some flowers she had not noticed before.

"O grandma, what are those?" she cried.

"Phlox, darling. Come, hurry; there goes the breakfast bell."

Eleanor went back after breakfast to look at her new flower friends. They stood up tall and straight, with big bunches of pink or white flowers on their very tips, like beautiful bonnets.

"Phlox," said Eleanor to herself. "That is what grandma called it. They sing in church about that:

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around."

Eleanor was an odd little girl, and strange thoughts often came into her curly head. But when she began to play, the phlox was forgotten.

That night, after she had gone to bed, she thought of it again. Could she see the "Angel of the Lord" if she watched the phlox?

The moon, big, round and beautiful, was shining now full into the hammock and the little girl sleeping there so quietly. Just then Eleanor awoke. She sat up and looked earnestly at the phlox.

No, she didn't see the angel, but he must have been there, for surely, "the glory shone around." Oh, if she had only stayed awake! Now she could not seem him. Now she had missed him because she went to sleep.

Mamma and grandma came running out. They were not in the picture—not in the hammock in the moonlight, but how glad they were to find Eleanor safe!

When she told them why she had come out into the garden, they didn't laugh, but grandma said:

"You precious child! I don't think you would have to look far to see one of the Lord's angels."

Eleanor after that always called the beautiful moonlight "God's glory."

An Accomplished Dog.

Roger was his name, Yankton, S. D., his home; and as to his family, he was a dog of unknown pedigree. He had many accomplishments, but music was the chief one of them. His master played the guitar; and Roger would say "Roger, come and sing."

Roger would seat himself on his haunches, throw back his head and emit a howl of varying key and force.

"Louder, Roger."

A howl of greater volume issued from Roger's throat.

"Now softly!"

It died down to a whisper.

The dog seemed to enjoy this performance as much as the audience and never failed to respond when called upon.

In his strolls about town, he became acquainted with a friendless, homeless cur of amiable disposition, toward whom Roger's heart warmed and took him home. Thereafter he shared all his meals with his friend, eating about half the contents of the plate set out for him, and then calling his protege to finish the remainder. At last the family, touched by this kindness, gave them a double portion, and thereafter Dog Number Two was a regular boarder.

He was a canine of friendly temperament, as we have said, and was always frisking around our feet, trying to gain some notice or a friendly pat, and wagging his tail violently. This last habit was pronounced that he was finally named Waggles.

He and Roger continued on the best of terms after Waggles became one of the family, and wherever one went the other was sure to go. One day when the mistress of the house went to market, the two dogs, contrary to their usual custom, accompanied her. Roger entered the butcher shop, while Waggles remained outside on the walk. While his mistress was making her purchase, Rogers seated himself in front of the counter and by short, sharp barks and other unmistakable signs, intimated to the butcher his desire for a bone. The man threw him one, and Roger, catching it in his mouth, carried it outside, where, instead of sitting down to eat it himself, he presented it to Waggles. Then he went back into the shop and repeated his performance unswerve. The butcher was so amused and pleased at his unselfishness, that he laughed and said, "Well, Roger, one other, then, old fellow, so you can each have one."

How Baby Walter Came to Think.

Far up in the old apple tree, high among the branches, a tiny elf sat in the heart of a pretty blossom. His thinking cap was on his head and his little round eyes looked out from under the rim of it. Under the spreading boughs of the tree Baby Walter lay, in mamma's lap, smiling down at her eyes and kicking his fat little legs sturdily. The pretty green leaves waved lightly in the gentle breeze, and all the apple blossoms filled the air with their delicate fragrance. Mamma thought one of the little petals fell in her hand, and sang as she patted the tiny toes:

"One little toe, one little toe,
Soft as down and white as snow.
Two little toes, two little toes,
Baby's cheeks are like the rose.
Three little toes, three little toes,
How fast mother's baby grows.
Four little toes, four little toes,
Oh, what a little speck of a nose!
Five little toes, toes so small,
Mamma loves her baby best of all."

Mamma thought out the little rhyme all for Baby Walter and whenever she sings it little Walter doubles up his tiny fists and laughs and crows.

Up in the tree the little elf sat, and taking off one of his hands to sang a little song to himself. He saw mamma's bright eyes look into baby's, and it was so pretty to see them so happy that the elf happy too. He reached over to the next blossom, broke its stem and dropped it softly down into Baby Walter's hand. Then Baby Walter looked so pleased that the little fairy elf scraped his thinking cap right on the baby's head.

Now the thinking cap makes you think. Perhaps your kindergarten teacher has asked you to put yours on some time. Well, this was the very same sort of a thinking cap, only it was smaller. The minute it touched Baby Walter's head he began to think. He thought how sweet was mamma's smile, how bright and beautiful all the trees with their soft pink blossoms, how blue the sky, and how nice baby felt. Then papa came home from the office at evening and played peekaboo with him and Walter thought that was fine. How do you suppose you came to think?

A Narrow Escape.

Bessie bade Prudence good-by with a loving squeeze.

"Now be good," she said, "and stay at home all the afternoon! Don't go out of the yard, or those naughty dogs may chase you."

Prudence didn't say anything; but she looked very much as if she meant to run away, for she didn't like to stay alone.

She had a nap on the piazza, and then looked lighter and lighter. She took a walk across the next lot, and see that bird's nest in the grass—the one Sue pointed out, but let her touch. Maybe there were little birds there now!

She had gone only a few yards beyond the gate when she heard a yelp, and she had just time to run frightfully up a tree before there were three dogs almost upon her.

How they did bark and caper! She looked lighter and lighter, frightened and trembling.

After awhile they went away, but Prudence did not dare to come down, for fear they would return. Oh, how she wished she had minded Bessie! Good children were among the branches until she saw the family drive into the yard. Then she called and called. For awhile nobody heard her, and it was growing dusky. And, oh, how she was afraid!

Finally she called in such trouble that the nurse ran out to rescue her, and in a few minutes she was cuddled close in the little girl's arms.

"Poor Prudence!" said Bessie. "Did the dogs chase you again? Ah, you should have stayed home, as I told you—naughty Prudence!" and she gave her some gentle pats that didn't hurt a mite.

Prudence wanted to say that she was sorry for what she had done; she wanted to tell Bessie all about her narrow escape; but she couldn't—for Prudence was a gray and white kitten.